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Leta Fae Deithloff

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The Dissertation Committee for Leta Fae Deithloff  
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

**In Pursuit of Transformation:**  
**Perceptions of Writing and Learning in an Experiential Learning**  
**Classroom**

Committee:

---

Diane L. Schallert, Supervisor

---

Edmund T. Emmer

---

JoyLynn H. Reed

---

Marilla D. Svinicki

---

Claire Ellen Weinstein

**In Pursuit of Transformation:  
Perceptions of Writing and Learning in an Experiential Learning  
Classroom**

by

**Leta Fae Deithloff, B.A., M.A.**

**Dissertation**

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## **Dedication**

I want to thank my amazing husband Tim, whose love and support have helped me through this challenging but rewarding time. You make me a better person, and I am so grateful for the bright guiding light you are in my life. I also want to thank our family, who pulled together to help care for our special Little Man, born in the middle of this process. Without your assistance, I would not be where I am today...in so many ways. I am so blessed by you and your great devotion. And for my son Tyler, may you always have the strength and courage to follow your dreams. You are and always will be my best accomplishment.

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**In Pursuit of Transformation:  
Perceptions of Writing and Learning in an Experiential Learning  
Classroom**

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Using as a basis what Dewey (1938) called "wholehearted" learning, or the undeniable link between the intellect and the feelings that surround a learning experience, I explored college students' potential for "change" in their knowledge, emotions, motivation, attitude, and perceptions. So much of what is known about learning indicates that *how* one learns can tremendously influence *what* one learns in terms of the knowledge and understanding that develops—a fact that implicates the importance of situated learning and a need to explore the "individual in context" (Pintrich, 2000, p. 223). Set within an experiential learning environment, one in which students learn in a context that mirrors what they will encounter in the "real world," I used grounded theory methodology to develop a paradigm of *change in students over time*. As a participant observer in a magazine writing course for the duration of the semester, I investigated what it meant to the students to be

transformed through a classroom experience and how change was made possible within a composition course.

Through analysis of interviews, journal entries, and questionnaires from 25 students, the study revealed the importance of reflection as a means for and a method of detecting change. Together with observation and these methods of reflection, a holistic text analysis on the students' essays, or "articles," implicated several course-based and individually-based conditions that support change, the nature of change students endure during a semester, including transformation or "learning that lasts" (Mentowski & associates, 2000), and the effects of the ensuing change both within students and within their texts. The results emphasize beneficial contributions to writing instruction, to models of learning, and the practice of service-learning and experiential learning as a possible context for change.



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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### **The Beginning of a Study**

During my first semester teaching Freshman Composition at the University of Texas at Austin, one concerned student made a remark about one of our assignments. He said, “I am having a tough time getting into this assignment. I just don’t see how I am going to need this later on.” While I had a clever response to alleviate his concern at the time, the comment stuck with me. How could I structure assignments so that students could find meaning in them or at least understand a purpose for completing them? The task of writing is difficult enough for students without asking them to battle boredom or to feel that their work has no bearing on their future.

I soon discovered that I was not alone in my questioning. Important scholars in the field of Rhetoric and Composition and Educational Psychology had already begun exploring how the context of a specific situation influences the writing an individual produces. For example, Faigley suggested that complex relationships exist “between writing and the social, organization, and professional contexts in which that writing is done” (1985, p. 247). This concept suggests that students may reap long-term benefits if they are allowed to practice writing in settings that are as realistic as possible.

The problem arises when one realizes that writing for the academy creates strikingly different writing than that which is performed outside the academy (Bacon, 2000). “It is not enough to tell students that writing varies with its audience and purpose: If students are to develop real (not merely abstract) understanding of rhetorical principles, they need to write in more than one setting, for more than one audience and more than one purpose” (p. 606). Further proof of discrepancies occurs when students, now employees, are asked to perform what they had been learning while in school. “When employers complain that students can’t write, they often mean that students have to *unlearn* the academic writing they were rewarded for in college” (Elbow, 1991, p. 136, emphasis his).

Thus, the implications are that learning needs to be as authentic as possible if students are to learn what educators expect them to learn and if they are to use what they have learned once they graduate. As Dewey (1938) might advocate, the education they receive should sponsor their continued growth and development, thereby implicating the need for writing within the intended context, or what educational psychologists might call *situated learning* or *situated cognition*. This concept advocates the necessity for learning to occur within the environment to which the learning will be applied. Ignoring this principle can create the aforementioned differences between academic and nonacademic writing. One way to resolve this problem is through curriculum change that is represented by a movement known as *experiential learning*.

### **Experiential Education: The Foundations of a Study**

Based on the notion that "knowledge and understanding are under continuous construction as we increase our experience, knowledge base, and ideas about how old conceptions and new information fit together to explain the world" (Eyler & Gyles, Jr., 1999, p. 195), experiential learning seeks to combine the world outside of the academy with the education experienced from within. The principles of experiential learning also reflect Dewey's notion of "wholehearted" learning (1938), or the undeniable link between the intellect and the feelings that surround a student's learning experience. This pedagogy, which gives students the opportunity to gain practical knowledge in "real-world" settings, has broad educational applications. Internships, study abroad, faculty-student research, community-based problem solving, certain laboratory simulations, and a concept known as service-learning all fall within this category because they ask students to apply what they learn in the classroom to a particular setting of interest. Because experiential education "offers us as good an opportunity as we have in higher education to create a critical pedagogy, a form of discourse in which teachers and students conduct an unfettered investigation of social institutions, power relations and value commitments" (Moore, 1990, p. 280),

it is an important context in which to frame a study on a student's ability to experience holistic change in his or her knowledge, affect, motivation, beliefs, and perceptions.

Within this overarching pedagogical concept, service-learning was of special interest in the study because of its potential to influence change in students and its implementation within two of the four assignments used in the magazine writing course under investigation. Whether due to the nature of service-learning or its broader categorization of experiential learning, the context created by these authentic tasks influences a student's potential for improvement. Context, after all, is crucial to composition studies because "it influences what writers represent to be their goals, criteria, and strategies for writing. From this perspective context can be interpreted as a frame for action that shapes the writer's conception of the task" (Chin, 1994, p. 448) and therefore their intentions as writers.

### ***Why Service-Learning?***

Defined as "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" (Jacoby, 1996, p. 5), this pedagogical alternative attempts, by its very nature, to offer students a meaningful education. The essential premise of service-learning is best captured by Ed Zlotkowski:

Far from denying the value of more traditional pedagogical strategies—including the basic lecture/discussion—it transforms and renews the educational enterprise as a whole. By linking the classroom to the world of praxis, it allows induction to complement deduction, personal discovery to challenge received truths, immediate experience to balance generalizations and abstract theory. In and through service-learning, students learn to engage in problem definition and problem solving in an authentic, powerful way (1998, p. 3-4).

Because of its appropriate fit in the classroom, especially in composition courses, many institutions of higher education across the country are beginning to follow the



lead of Stanford, Notre Dame, The University of Michigan, and many others by implementing service-learning (and experiential learning) in their cross-disciplinary courses. As in the composition classroom, an inquiry into the purpose of education in general often yields the belief that graduating seniors should be well trained in their respective disciplines, confident in their abilities as professionals, and generally improved as a result of their college experience. This can be taken to mean several things, but the easiest and most applicable translation is that students should be better workers, better citizens, and better people as a result of their four or more years of college. For example, the mission here at The University of Texas at Austin as stated on the welcome page for prospective and entering students is, “From teaching, to research, to public service, the University's activities support its core purpose: *to transform lives for the benefit of society through the core values of learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility.*”

Thus, the resulting uncertainty is how do universities transform students in terms of core values such as discovery, freedom, and responsibility in a manner that benefits society from within the classroom. The answer offered by experiential learning is to engage them in social contexts outside academia where they can benefit from real, first-hand experiences that tend to spark student interest and commitment.

The solution is not new, as is evident by the frequent references to John Dewey and other, educational theorists mentioned in the literature, such as Lev Vygotsky, David Kolb, and Paulo Freire. What is new, however, is the recent commitment to the pedagogy as a promising instructional option. With the recent availability of books such as *Service-Learning in Higher Education* by Barbara Jacoby and associates (1996) and new journals devoted solely to service-learning such as *The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, service-learning as a concept is now receiving more scholarly attention.

Yet despite the attention it is receiving, little is known about the contribution of service or experiential learning in the area of student cognitive development. Much is known about the benefits to students' moral, social, personal, cultural, emotional, and

motivational development, but detailed reports of content-based learning outcomes are an important focus for new research such as this study. The dearth of information prompted Eyler (2000) to say:

We know that service has something important to contribute to personal and social development; we have less reason to be confident that uniting it with academic work improves learning. Intellectual outcomes — knowledge, cognitive development, problem-solving skills, and transfer of learning — are at the heart of the school and college mission and yet we know relatively little about how they are affected by service-learning. So while we will touch on the many student outcomes documented in the literature, the primary focus of our recommendations for future research will address gaps in our understanding of the academic learning goals of service-learning and the instructional processes needed to achieve these goals.

### ***Why the Composition Classroom?***

Because the attention of researchers has been on understanding the general benefits of service-learning and potentially unifying some standards to make the practice more effective holistically, we know even less about service-learning as applied to specific fields. Rhetoric and Composition is no exception. However, this is an unfortunate oversight because if the results depend on how service-learning is used in the classroom and if educators use service-learning according to the specific needs of their course goals, then it seems possible that one could learn more about experiential learning in general by first understanding how it works within a specific context. After much research, the results could then be applied to a more general sense of what works and what does not.

For this reason, my study focused only on the field of Rhetoric and Composition and attempted to “take up the charge and investigate community writing projects in context” (Deans, 2000, p. 5). This field is of special interest for several important reasons. The first is that conditions are right to examine education’s rhetorical goals. “Composition courses reflect our public visions of literacy, and once again that vision is under reconstruction” (Flower, 1996, p. 249). Deans advanced this inquisition by

proposing the kind of questions those of us who teach composition should be asking: “What particular kind of writer do we hope to encourage?” (2000, p. 25). The answer lies somewhere between the need to educate students in the ways of effective communication and the need to connect them to a more authentic learning environment such as that which service to the community provides. Experiential learning can serve as this bridge while providing students with insight into key composition concepts that are difficult to grasp otherwise. Most students struggle with truly comprehending what it means to write for an audience, how the structure and format of writing differs in different contexts, and how the writing they learn in the academy could change once applied to the real world. Service-learning alleviates this concern by offering students “real rhetorical situations in which to work: real tasks, real audiences, real purposes for writing” (Heilker, 1997, p. 75). Consequently, the new vision of composition studies foresees students working in more authentic, versatile, and worthwhile learning environments.

The second reason as to why the study focused on the composition classroom is because of the unique opportunity a class on writing offers the researcher. Writing has the potential to serve as both a measurable learning outcome (the final product) and as a tool for enabling student learning (reflection). Thus, writing provides insight into the process of learning as it occurs and the outcome of learning once the student has participated in the service-learning project.

The final and perhaps most important reason the study explored composition is that the act of writing mirrors the “whole-hearted” conditions that students often go through while engaged in service-learning. The process of writing often places students in uncertain situations that ask them to reconsider what they know, what they do not know, and what they must do to negotiate the difference. Writers must consider certain issues in order to formulate their response in a way that is comprehensible to others. This process is often associated with much emotion, from anxiety to elation. Both writing and experiential learning encompass more than just

cognitive resources, and thus, students engaged in these processes are more susceptible to one of the main interests of this study: transformative learning

### **The Transformative Nature of Learning**

During a pilot study for this investigation (Deithloff, 2001), I asked the administrative liaison in a service-learning project how she defined service-learning, or what she called a method for creating “lifelong learners.” She responded:

You often hear of service-learning described as hand, heart, and head because it’s with your hands you provide service and it changes the heart and you incorporate the head in making those cognitive connections. So, there’s a tremendous opportunity through service for students to have an opportunity to grow as human beings as well as students of whatever field.

Students and educators alike often report this “change” or “growth” in students as one of the most common and desirable effects of experiential learning. Known as transformative learning due to the “powerful impact” service-learning has on the lives of students (Eyler & Giles, Jr., 1999), this concept of change is one of the main focuses of the study because of its potential implications for learning. Learning that transforms seems to be the goal of education in general. As teachers, we hope that our students’ knowledge changes with increased exposure to class concepts, that their opinions are developed by learning about the opinions of others, and that they experience growth as a byproduct of education. Additionally, we hope that how students feel about their learning is altered as a result of their experience. If students feel better about themselves as learners, they may be more willing to engage in the classroom, resulting in a more profound learning experience and in student work that is more representative of their capabilities.

At the core of this desire is the idea of transformative learning, defined by Cranton as “the development of revised assumptions, premises, ways of interpreting experience, or perspectives on the world by means of critical self-reflection” (1994, p. xii). Therefore, it seems that the best way to understand how students are learning

through context is to get at how they are being transformed by the experience. By comprehending the transformative process, we as educators can make the educational experience more meaningful for the students, both in terms of what they are learning and how they feel about their learning. Mentkowski and associates (2000) suggested that this should be one of the goals of teaching, to foster student development and performance as well as learning.

To accomplish an exploration of the process, students must first have the opportunity to be transformed through placement in the appropriate learning environments. “Transformative learning occurs as we struggle to solve a problem where our usual ways of doing or seeing do not work, and we are called to question the validity of what we think we know or critically examine the very premises of our perception of the problem” (Eyler & Giles, Jr., 1999, p. 133). Thus, experiential learning serves as the perfect environment for this “struggle” because it asks students, by its very nature, to negotiate unfamiliar situations with knowledge and training from the academy.

The need to make tasks more authentic comes from a basic need to make learning more meaningful, which calls into question what it means really to learn. Is it enough for students to retain the information and recall it on a test? Is learning measured by how they can apply their new knowledge to novel situations? Should not developed thought in the form of critical thinking, which asks students to negotiate uncertainty, also be an instructional goal? A mantra of college educators is often to teach students to think for themselves, but this requires them to formulate first and then understand their own opinions and beliefs. Can this be done without exposing them to the perspectives of others? Mentkowski and associates (2000) suggested that lasting, impressionable learning is “integrative, experiential, transformative, purposeful, self assessed, developmental, and deeply sustained in context” and that it occurs through “a blend of alternating harmony and conflict” (p. 401). If this is true, then it poses serious implication for the practice of teaching, an issue that is explored in the study.

Of further interest to the idea of transformative learning and the need to foster student development is the role of motivation on a student's ability to engage in the construction of meaning. Competing incentives and certain emotions, such as anxiety, fear, or hesitancy, can often interfere with learning, especially in the context of writing (Rose, 1985). A student's reasons for committing to the task of learning should also be considered. Tendencies for students to be influenced by such beliefs as mastery versus performance orientations (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), which direct one's intentions, can determine how students react in a learning environment. Thus, a discussion on learning should account for many potential influences on the learner.

### ***Realizing Changes in Writing***

The idea of transformative learning is particularly applicable to the field of writing because of the nature of the writing process, a process that asks students to engage in the difficult task of creating meaning in a manner that is legible enough to be interpreted by another, namely the reader or the audience of a text. As co-constructors of meaning, writers must account for the multiple motivational, situational, intellectual, and affective factors that will influence those reading their texts. This directing principle determines what writers say, and in the process, affects what they are learning about both writing and the content of what they are writing.

Yet, once again we see that learning is dependent on the circumstances in which it was created. In 1987, Langer and Applebee found that different forms of writing produced different forms of learning. Based on this notion and the idea that learning is so situated within a particular context, in the current investigation I explored students' potential to experience transformation as a result of their involvement in a particular course. Exactly what it means to "change" in terms of a writer's learning, performance, and development is also addressed, whether improvement is isolated to "learning as accretion" where knowledge is determined by the retention of basic knowledge or to "knowledge restructuring" in which underlying shifts in conceptualization occur (Langer & Applebee, 1987, p. 74).

Another potential consideration is what it means to be transformed in terms of the kind of learning that occurs. How might that compare to accretion, restructuring, or some previously unidentified learning outcome? Kolb defined learning in terms of transformation: “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (1984, p. 38). However, exactly what is the nature of this stated relationship between learning and transformation, and what conditions might be responsible for causing transformative change?

One reason these questions are so salient for the field of writing is because of the ability of the writing process to create meaning. Known as epistemic writing, or writing to learn, researchers of this concept (Kelly, 1995; Kucer, 1985; Odell, 1980; Schumacher & Nash, 1991; Sternglass, 1993; van Nostrand, 1979), recognize that writers do not often know what they are going to write until they are in the process of writing. The surrounding text, purpose of the piece, organization of ideas, and identification with the audience all become factors writers must negotiate, the results of which generate the meaning for and within the text. This topic will be discussed in more detail later, but it is important to mention it here because of its relationship to the idea of reflection.

### **Why Study Reflection?**

Due to its very nature, writing and the experiential learning environment tend to put students in the wake of change. Both notions sometimes ask them to face uncomfortable or at least unfamiliar circumstances. Reflection requires students to acknowledge their response to these situations, which is why the reflection process is so integral within experiential education: reflection is the piece that connects the learning that occurs in context to classroom learning. As part of the service-learning and experiential experience, students write about, discuss, or do some other activity that allows them to verbalize what they are going through while they are exposed to new and sometimes alarming social issues. “Reflection is supposed to encourage a movement between observation and intellectual analysis or consciousness-raising,

and conversely to apply abstract concepts (such as citizenship, public ethics, or social justice) to contexts beyond the classroom” (Anson, 1997, p. 167). It is the hope of this curriculum that students will later adopt an understanding for the need to participate within one’s community and possibly continue active involvement, but researchers believe that this would not occur without the opportunity to process what students are experiencing through reflection (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jacoby, 1996; Rhodes, 1997).

Specifically, students would not experience transformational learning or understand the emotional/motivational responses they generate unless they have a reflexive outlet. “Learning by doing...is misleading advice until we specify what and who the doers are, what and who the done-to are, and what their relationships to each other are and are expected to become. We may, in other words, learn precisely the wrong lessons from community service if we forget that practice as such can serve alternative ends and values” (Radest, 1993, p. 189). Therefore, an exploration of how service-learning and experiential learning produce the reported learning outcomes would not be complete or even legitimate without considering the role of reflection in the process.

In particular, writing as one form of reflection takes on special significance because it incorporates the other two cited methods, discussion and thinking, and because of its stated benefits in other contexts. Because epistemic writing organizes thought, stimulates learning, helps construct meaning, and permits individuals to understand more than they did before writing (Nystrand, 1982; Schallert, 1987; Spivey, 1990; Squire, 1983; Tierney & Pearson, 1983), writing as a method of reflection and as a learning outcome present great potential for a study on change in students. As Yancey (1998) suggested, the effects of writing, specifically that of written reflection, are extraordinary for students: “As they learn, they witness their own learning: they show us how they learn” (p. 8). Thus, it is important to examine reflection to understand how students learn or how they are transformed by writing and through experiential learning.



This study also explored a specific type of writing reflection, which I call metawriting. Based on the concept of metacognition, which Flavell called, "knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena" (1979, p. 906), metawriting is simply knowledge and cognition about writing as determined through the act of writing. This was of special interest because it has not received direct attention in the writing literature, although its effectiveness can be inferred from what is known about epistemic writing. Additionally, it seemed logical to investigate writing about writing within the context of a study on written reflection.

### **The Directing Research Questions**

The previous discussion has alluded to the importance of several main issues within the study. For the purpose of clarity, let me reiterate some of these concerns and express their general importance.

The research on service-learning often claims specific learning outcomes but has not measured these outcomes directly. The data in important works, such as *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* are interesting, but may be leaving out important aspects as the authors only used student self-report methods to generate outcomes. Because it was not feasible to study adequately all possible outcomes within one study, I originally focused my efforts on transformative learning, due to its potential to incorporate the motivational, emotional, and cognitive aspects of learning. This single interest burgeoned into what it means truly to learn and what learning at both surface and deep levels looks like for students and their text. Therefore, the first research question was:

1. How might transformation appear when it occurs, or how can we deduce the presence of transformation in students' writing by analyzing students' formal written reports as well as their responses in journals, interviews, and questionnaires?

Additional questions were:

2. How does the reflective writing used in a service-learning course influence students' views of the world, of their learning and/or knowledge, and of themselves as writers?
3. How does metawriting influence students' understanding of text and their ability to produce it?
4. What are the factors that could facilitate or interfere with the role of written reflection as a transforming agent in any of the previous considerations?

These questions, addressed in the following pages, represent the next logical step in the research and improve our understanding of these issues. The exploration of the questions also generated additional implications about creating an atmosphere for change in students and for what it means to be “changed” as a result of a course.

### ***Organization of the Dissertation***

Having introduced the rationale and research questions of the study, I present a review of the literature relevant to the constructs of writing changes in students, epistemic writing, and writing in context, especially a service-learning context, in the next chapter. In Chapter 3, I describe the methods used to conduct the study. In Chapter 4, I depict the model that emerged from my interpretation of the data and reveal the findings supporting the model. Finally, in Chapter 5, I address the research questions and the main issues from the study and provide implications of the results.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding how students learn the craft of writing has been of interest to researchers for many years, with a flurry of attention in the last 25 years. In this chapter, I review this literature, presenting my perspective on it in four sections. The first considers what it means to write well. This discussion spans perspectives that began with the Expressivist tradition of the late 70's through the most recent views that take into account a blended view, one that I use as the basis of my conceptualization of writing for this study. The second section considers how the context for learning to write influences writers. In this section, I bring in consideration of what it means to make writing authentic, a concern that often moves teachers and students to include writing assignments that are based in real world applications. Thus, I review the work on writing in service-learning courses and in experiential learning contexts. The third major section of the review considers the epistemic benefits of reflection. One reason this concern rises to such an important level in the review is that, on the one hand, writing that causes the writer's knowledge to grow, epistemic writing, is central to a consideration of a writing course that would have as its goal the transformative power of experiential learning. In addition, the hallmark of effective service-learning or experiential learning is the engagement of reflection as the catalyst of change. In a final section, I consider how writing can be evaluated and how one might know that a writer had improved. Inherent within this last section is an exploration of writing instruction goals and how these goals might be actualized within student texts.

### **Writing Well: A Historical Perspective**

To understand student writing improvements better, it is helpful to recognize what historically has been considered "good" writing. A necessary precursor to that discussion is how various researchers have viewed the task of writing because how

one perceives the writing process may influence how one regards the text that is produced.

### ***In the Beginning***

In a landmark paper, Faigley (1986) argued that modern research on composition began with the Expressivist view, which portrayed the process of writing as intriguing yet elusive in its ability to be observed. Writing was deemed an act of evolution as writers discovered their intentions while engaged in the process. "Only at the end will you know what you want to say or the words you want to say it with" (Elbow, 1973, p. 15).

In this view, writers revealed hesitancy towards a detailed exploration of the writing process because to examine it too closely was to curb the somewhat impulsive nature of the process. Measured by their sincerity to the task at hand and the text being produced, writers were considered successful if they generated products that exhibited integrity, spontaneity, and originality (Faigley, 1986). The ability to produce these products was a mystery, however, because successful writers were born with certain innate abilities or made through personal development and self-actualization.

Inspirations, in the Expressivist view, not only determined who would enjoy the gift of writing, but they also dictated what would become text. The meaning of the writer's current intentions would materialize as language within the writer's consciousness. "Good" writers were those who received clear, creative, and high caliber thoughts, and success was measured by how they then expressed these thoughts as text. The text became not so much an object of a writer's cognition but a product of their intrinsic ability and writing proficiency, making the process too revered to research. Nevertheless, good writers were determined by the success of their text.

### ***Writing as a Process***

In the late 70's and early 80's, Flower and Hayes (1981) began a new era of research on writing by depicting writing as an active, mental process. The new

perspective gave researchers the ability to conceptualize writing as something that could be observed, influenced, and measured in ways that were not encouraged in the Expressivist view. The process could be investigated at any one of the three conceptualized stages of writing within Flower and Hayes' model: planning, translating, and reviewing.

During the planning stage, the primary focus in the 1981 article, writers attempt to make explicit their intended meaning through purposeful, cognitive activities. Knowledge generation, information organization, and goal formation occurs throughout this stage as writers struggle to devise a writing plan that represents their current meaning, defined as "a joint product of knowledge and purpose " (Flower & Hayes, 1984, p. 122).

The translating stage depicted writers as transforming the internalized meaning produced during the planning stage into words. The resulting text, both what Flower et al. (1986) called the surface written text and the text within the writer's head, was then subjected to evaluations and revisions during the reviewing stage. In these evaluations, writers compare their perceptions of the text revisions to their intentions and to the criteria they represent to themselves (Flower et al., 1986).

Throughout all phases of the process, the task environment (specifically the nature of the topic, the audience, the task's importance, and the impact of the text produced so far) were said to influence the writer. A writer's long-term memory, including knowledge of the audience, the topic, and the writing plans, serves as a source from which the writer writes. These factors affect how writers choose to perceive meaning at a given stage, which alters the words they will select to eventually appear as text.

In 1984, Flower and Hayes focused their analysis on the translation stage within the writing process in an effort to understand the composing process, which they claimed existed on a continuum of representation to prose production. As writers compose, they shift between various symbolic representations of meaning, including images, prototypes, and propositions, to more textual forms of meaning, such as notes, drafts, and text. The continuum offers writers different ways of capturing the

current meaning in their ideas because some representations "will be better at expressing certain kinds of meaning than prose would be, and some will be more difficult to translate into prose than others" (Flower & Hayes, 1984, p. 122). This theory, known as the Multiple Representation Thesis, explains that the choices writers make as to which forms are the most appropriate for conveying their current meaning will affect how their intentions are interpreted. As ideas progress through the continuum of increasing linguistic options, the number of prose constraints the writer must deal with increases. A process called instantiation marks the writer's intentions as they shift between non-verbal representations towards more refined formats, such as metaphors, concepts, propositions, goals, notes, and outlines.

Not all internal representations will achieve textual status in its most complete sense. Writers often encounter frustrations when the meaning they are attempting to convey cannot be easily captured by any textual constraints. The highly abstract knowledge of an expert, the extended networks of "how to" or procedural knowledge, and representations concerning visual images, such as a bird's flight, are difficult to convert into text without incurring a loss in overall meaning.

From this perspective, "good" writing is determined again by the text the writer produces, as in the Expressivist view, but for different reasons. "A text is not so much an object as an outcome of an individual's cognitive processes. The primary attention shifts away from the text to the individual writer's emerging conception of the writing task" (Faigley, 1985, p. 235) with a special emphasis on the choices made during composition, the writer's goals, and the constraints the task places on the direction of the ensuing text. Success, then, is determined by an individual writer's ability to negotiate all of these considerations and produce a text that meets the demands created by the task through a deliberate, unwavering process.

### ***Additional Cognitive Perspectives***

While Flower and Hayes are acknowledged as the founders of cognitive views of writing, they are not the only researchers to contribute their thoughts on the writing process. Often, the very nature of writing facilitates learning in the form of idea

formulation, improved relationships between thought processes, and knowledge organization (Langer & Applebee, 1987; Schumacher & Nash, 1991; Sternglass, 1993). Schumacher and Nash (1991) explored these concepts more thoroughly through Flower and Hayes' Multiple Representation Thesis by stating that the more concrete forms of writing help writers specify their ideas and establish relationships that may not have been apparent in more abstract forms of representation. "This results in more refined interpretations which clarify amorphous and contradictory concepts and sharpen the writer's understanding" (p. 80), giving the ensuing product contextual depth and comprehensibility.

Other researchers have claimed that the act of writing is not as important as the way in which knowledge is stored. Torrence et al. (1996) described textual creation as an effortful and explicit process that involves a deliberate, strategic exploration of the writer's long-term memory. The information to be included is selected by its relevance to the topic, evaluated according to its originality (does it provide solutions for the task and is it unique to the writer's perspective), and is recorded based on the merits of the evaluation. According to Torrence et al. (1996), information appears in the final product in an order similar to the one in which it was initially generated.

Many cognitive researchers focused on the individual characteristics that could facilitate ease in text production. Content originates from a structured knowledge base, or from what Walker (1987) called the efficient and effective organization of a learner's memory. Graesser et al. (1984) included experience within this knowledge base by suggesting that content generation can occur through the retrieval of specific experiences and materials from the past. This gives experts a distinct advantage over novices during composition due to the advanced structure and the richer content of their knowledge.

Within this perspective, the act of writing involves comprehension of the nature of the task, knowing how to organize an appropriate response, and then transforming the ideas that correspond with that response into writing (Smagorinsky, 1991). If the task at hand falls outside of a writer's knowledge about language, content, and

purpose, comprehension must be supplemented in some way or the writing produced will lack the proper foundation. More specifically, generation suffers when a writer's cognitive and linguistic repertoire is insufficient or when a writer's composing rules, planning strategies, or writing assumptions do not match the constraints provided by a particular task (Rose, 1985). Therefore, knowledge about writing becomes as crucial as a writer's experiences.

Although not unique to the cognitive view, the belief that the writing process is directed by the individual characteristics of the writer is certainly a defining feature of this perspective. In this view, successful text production lies within a writer's knowledge of or experience with the writing process. Ability, where it is lacking, can be attained through practice, interest in the task, and increased exposure to writing (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Flower, 1989; Hilgers et al., 1999; Pressley & McCormick, 1995), among other things. Thus, individuals are the primary agents in how they themselves will fare with writing.

### ***Text-Based Studies***

Another branch of research on writing began as a reaction to the cognitive models. Although the role of the audience and the input of the preceding text had been considered in the then current models, some researchers felt that these factors failed to receive enough attention. The role of the text in the writing process was too substantial a force to be relegated to a theoretical footnote.

In this view, text directly determines the flow the written product will take, because if a writer's intentions are to be understood, the text must follow a logical order and clearly establish relationships between concepts. McCutchen (1984) proposed that too much of an emphasis on planning, as exemplified in the research of Flower and Hayes, discounted the real work that begins during sentence generation. Well-planned texts did not, after all, equate to well-written texts. Therefore, the text should be examined for the contributions its internal lawfulness lends to the act of writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1983).



Because meaning is dependent on the particular word order a writer selects, indicating that sequencing establishes relationships among words (Pinker, 1995; Ratner & Gleason, 1993), sentence level considerations become an important factor during writing. McCutchen (1984) explained that the text already produced, due to its ability to influence phrasing, could cause writers to consider originally unplanned writing directions. Therefore, writers who possess sentence production fluency and efficient cognitive abilities can command writing as it occurs through the generation of text.

The preceding text plays a key role in text-based studies because it serves as a transition piece and a coherence link for similar concepts and ideas. It has the power to dictate a writer's thought process to planned, novel, or non-existent destinations (McCutchen, 1984). If the relationship between the text and its context cannot be determined during writing, the idea captured by the text is at risk of being omitted, despite its merit, because the overall cohesiveness of the text produced is deemed so important to the writer. After all, a text can only succeed at luring readers into engagement at a comprehension level when the ensuing information connects with the reader's perceptions of the text (Beck et al., 1995). These connections exist because writers consider the context of the surrounding text in order to organize their meaning.

Hayes (1996) suggested that because writers use what they have previously written to determine the shape and meaning of the text that follows, writing modifies its own environment. Writers negotiate the factors that surround their nonhierarchical interactions with the text, and they react accordingly, even if that means beginning with new semantic planning. In some instances, the content of the sentence may not be fully realized, even as the writer begins to create syntactically complete sentence parts, until the semantics of the sentence become apparent (Hayes, 1996). Thus, writing becomes an act of discovery in which the overall outcome of the text is discovered only as it is being written (McCutchen, 1984) and only because it pays tribute to the text that surrounds it.

Because text and its context is so important in this view, good writing is determined by how “readable” the text is as measured by such quantifiable linguistic considerations as sentence length and word length (Faigley, 1985). With the text as the focus, certain generalizations are made about the specific texts, “generalizations that are sometimes stated prescriptively as rules for style and format” (p. 234). Therefore, the outcome takes a greater emphasis than the process the individual used to produce it.

### ***Socioconstructive Influences***

Although most cognitive scientists frequently admitted that the production of text does not evolve without the presence of experience, community, situational, or cultural supports and restrictions (Bazerman, 1985; Kucer, 1985), socioconstructivist researchers felt that to treat a writer's environment only as a referential factor discounts the overwhelming impact of social influences. Through language, society not only affects the world in which individuals interact, but it shapes and creates their view of reality (Kress, 1989; Prawat & Floden, 1994).

In writing research, this view includes a variety of perspectives ranging from how individuals use linguistic interactions with their collective others to negotiate the boundaries of their beings (Shotter, 1995; Wertsch & Rupert, 1993) to the belief that language is so inextricably linked to a culture and its values that to deny a writer his or her culture is to encourage resistance to writing (Fox, 1994).

Research within this viewpoint, however, does share some commonalties. Social conventions determine the nature of an individual's utterances, the context in which statements are used, and the language in which meaning is framed (Alexander et al., 1991; Bruner, 1981; Kantor, 1984; Kress, 1989; Mehan, 1985; Ratner & Gleason, 1993). By recognizing the appropriateness of certain linguistic situations, communication can be accomplished in a manner that respects and protects the interests of all involved (Person et al., 1995).

The crux of the socioconstructivist perspective explains that a writer's culture, experiences, and knowledge about the world defines that writer and the viewpoint

from which all works emerge (Bruner, 1986). Language and culture are so intertwined that they should not be viewed independently of each other because writers are reflections of their societal perspectives (Brandt, 1992; Kress, 1989). Thus, writing research should not attempt to define individuals in terms of their social influences, but should recognize individuals as constituents of culture, making the creation of both knowledge and language shared rather than individualistic endeavors (Prawat & Floden, 1994).

In this view, writing represents a socially shared phenomenon, indicating that the ideas expressed in written form can also be viewed as collective entities. Knowledge belongs to and is the product of a conglomeration of choices, prior knowledge, and experiences that define the subcultures of individuals existing within the larger culture of their respective societies, or discourse communities. "In constructing an idea, individuals, in concert with others, prepare a kind of plan for picking up information that might be provided by the environment" (Prawat & Floden, 1994, p. 39). These environmental constructions become resources for written text and serve to distinguish written products from the different discourse communities that created them. Therefore, texts are as intelligible to the community that created them as they are informative to external discourse communities (DeBeaugrande & Dressler, 1981). This perspective, then, "moves beyond the traditional rhetorical concern for audience, forcing researchers to consider issues such as social roles, group purposes, communal organization, ideology, and finally theories of culture" because the text becomes an entity that shapes the writer just as it is shaped by the writer (Faigley, 1985, p. 235-236). How good the text is is then a measure of how representative it is of the discourse community that facilitated its construction in terms of the language, style, subject, and knowledge used within the text.

### ***Current Theories about the Writing Process—A Blended Approach***

Current views of writing blend the motivational, emotional, and cognitive factors that form the individual perspective with the social considerations that influence the writing process. These views adopt the socioconstructive belief that an individual's

culture affects how the text will be interpreted, but the blended approach advances previous theories by suggesting that the text itself can become a form of culture because context projects its own environment. Context, defined by Chin (1994) as "the situation producing the text" (p. 448), can cue a reader's past experiences, assumptions, and expectations as it activates certain portions of knowledge (Flower, 1989). Certain word formations can trigger attentional responses within a reader (Bazerman, 1985) and redirect ensuing thought processes. This gives readers the freedom to create their personalized interpretations of the text based on the discourse communities and experiences that have made them who they currently are.

In a similar manner, content is dependent on the context in which it was constructed. This notion demands that writers pay special attention to the task, the reader, personal intentions (Flower, 1989), and other factors that direct the final text so that it remains true to the author's intentions and the task's context. The ensuing word selection creates an environment in which certain words will thrive and others will clash. Information, chosen on the basis of its relation to the writer's purpose, goals, and eventual uses for text (Chin, 1994) as well as how it will be received by the reader (Nystrand, 1989) will then perpetuate the selection of new information, assuming that it too meets similar constraints. Thus, the writer is continually directing the text even before it is being written.

One of the strengths of this perspective is its attention to emotional and motivational influences. These factors have been either absent or understated in the previous research, a fact that demonstrates how certain studies could seem somewhat unbalanced because "the terms cognition, context, and affect are linked by multiple, contradictory, visible, and invisible lines of interaction" (Flower, 1994, p. 251). These notions become even more relevant when one considers the extent to which motivation and emotion can determine how successful writers are at accomplishing tasks, or even how willing they are to attempt them. Hayes (1996) found that students who believed writing was a gift often experienced apprehension towards writing and had lower self-efficacy about their writing abilities. Similarly, Cleary (1991)

demonstrated that overburdened, conscious attention and frustration caused by a task that was inappropriately matched to a student's skill level tended to cause writer's block in the eleventh graders she observed. Both of these studies suggest that the previously forgotten mental challenges a writer must negotiate have the potential to stifle textual production because they negatively affect a writer's willingness to attempt writing.

Ultimately, to be effective, writing must reflect a union between the mind and the body, "with the body occupying a social sphere constituting a context for writing and the mind constructing the potential meanings for text in some other contexts of use" (Chin, 1994, p. 456). "Good" texts in this perspective represent a blend of theories in that the skills and abilities of individual writers are considered together with certain linguistic components of the text such as style, format, and presentation, along with the social and contextual constraints placed on both the individual and the text. Meaning is constructed through a reciprocal relationship between the writer, the text he or she produces, and the readers who interpret the text according to their own biases, knowledge, and experiences (Nystrand, 1989). Yet the text does not connect with the reader if the writer did not pay attention to good writing conventions, such as grammar, presentation, stylistic concerns, etc. Thus, successful texts are well-written examples of an individual and the discourse community of interest that connect with the reader in a meaningful way. This final perspective is reflected in my study.

Having described the blended approach for writing well I will be using to guide my thinking in this study, I now want to explicate particular factors that influence writers from within this perspective. Within the blended approach, individual writers must negotiate several forces that influence the meaning they attempt to construct. Social and cultural considerations, such as the reader of the text and semantic interpretations of the language within the text, factors associated with the individual writer, such as motivation and emotions, and certain aspects of the text itself can affect the writing process. Thus, it is important to acknowledge certain individualistic and textual aspects that can influence the writer in a socially constructed view of writing.

*The rhetorical triangle, a directing principle.* Because of the reciprocal relationship between readers, writers, and the text (Nystrand, 1982; Nystrand, 1989) known in composition classrooms as the rhetorical triangle, writers are influenced not only by the text they use, but also by their anticipation of what the reader might need in, expect from, or supply to the text (Spivey, 1990). Writers are, after all, readers and this information influences their knowledge of the text. As readers, writers hope to make their text as unique and as impressionable as possible, so they make linguistic and production decisions that they perceive will help them realize their goals within the context of or the purpose for the text. This directing principle must be acknowledged in order to fully comprehend how writers construct meaning because the audience plays such an important role in determining the effectiveness of the resulting construction.

*The impact of motivations and emotions.* By exploring the influence of motivation and emotions on writers, one hopes to identify those factors that can help or hinder their ability to construct meaning. The basic principles of how knowledge is processed in the mind may not matter if writers as students are unable to manage what they are experiencing. Thus, the research in this area tends to account for a student's reasons for learning in addition to discovering how students learn. As Langer (1986) expressed, "the meaning that develops is a consequence of a wide range of textual, contextual, and attitudinal forces continually at play in the human mind" (p. 221).

Of important consideration within an account of why some students learn is their willingness to approach the task, which usually pertains to their feelings towards writing. The work of Klinger (1977), an extension of the previously mentioned expectancy x value theory, explains how student beliefs about writing can affect them. Through expectancy, students choose realistic incentives or goals based on what they feel they can achieve. Then according to the strength of value, or which incentive is currently the most desirable, they decide which goal to pursue in relation to other goals and how aware they are of the incentive's existence, known as

availability in mind. To have meaning in one's life, then, is to have incentives and to pursue them. This theory pertains to writing because, for some students, performing well on assignments is an incentive. Concepts like self-efficacy can interfere with one's expectancy of their ability to realize an incentive and, therefore, make the incentive less desirable. Additionally, not attaining the incentive can cause emotional issues for students.

Therefore, motivation must be considered and addressed in the classroom in order to facilitate student learning. As Deci et al. (1991) stated, "For students to be actively engaged in the educational endeavor, they must value learning, achievement, and accomplishment even with respect to topics and activities they do not find interesting" (p. 338).

Bruning and Horn (2000) identified four clusters of factors that develop the motivation to write. The first, *nurturing functional beliefs about writing*, identifies the importance of: the classroom community, the nature of assignments, the opportunity for practice, and the variety of instructional activities in fostering one's feelings towards writing. Next, the authors identify the factor *fostering student engagement through authentic writing goals and contexts* and its supporting conditions, namely: encouraging personal interest in tasks, varying the kind of assignments used, creating the opportunity to write for multiple audiences, and providing appropriate feedback for revision. The third factor, *providing a supportive context for writing*, encourages educators to: foster appropriate goal setting, teach writing strategies, give ample feedback on progress, break tasks into manageable parts, and incorporate the use of peer groups. Finally, the authors identify the importance of *creating a positive emotional environment* by: creating feelings of safety, modeling appropriate attitudes, giving ample feedback, and helping students redirect their negative emotions. These are only some of the detailed conditions listed as support for each factor, but they provide an idea of the kind of environment teachers should establish in their classroom to support student learning, and they re-confirm the importance of authentic tasks.

One final point of interest in this area is Corno's (1989) term *volition*, or a self-regulatory process that helps learners stay committed to the tasks they have begun. While motivation helps students become involved in certain tasks, *volition* helps them stay involved. The use of self-regulatory strategies, especially in relation to writing, which is often the source of much anxiety, can help students become better learners by keeping them dedicated to improvement.

*Transformation.* Of special interest within my study is the idea of transformation and its influence on the writer. First proposed by Mezirow (1978), transformative learning is viewed as "a process of examining, questioning, validating, and revising" certain perceptions of student experiences and beliefs they encounter, which are filtered through "uncritically assimilated" ways of viewing the world and their affective and cognitive appraisals of it (Cranton, 1994, p. 26). The views affect what students incorporate in their writing and their views of what they think readers will expect. The author also suggested, "learning occurs when an individual enters a process of reconciling newly communicated ideas with the presuppositions of prior learning" (p. 27). This statement acknowledges the mutual relationship between affect and intellect in their joint impact on the writer.

Even though writers may desire a transformative experience, however, does not mean they are able to realize it. Cranton (1994) suggested that to produce transformation, one must first encounter a *trigger event*, which produces discomfort for the learner. The experience is then followed by a phase of *appraisal*, reflection on the problem, and *exploration* of ways to resolve the issue. This can lead to *developing alternative perspectives*, which involves testing of the new resolutions, and if all goes well, *transformation* into a new way of thinking. When transformation does occur, it can affect what Cranton (1994) saw as three crucial areas, labeled *epistemic* (knowledge and the use of knowledge), *sociolinguistic* (based on impressions of society, culture, and language usage), and *psychological* (one's views of one's self). When considered in unison, the results produce "learning that lasts" because it influences multiple aspects of the individual learner (Mentkowski & associates,



2000). Writers would be interested in transformation then for its impact on ways of thinking, feeling, and viewing the perspectives of others, which speak to important aspects of their potential to produce meaningful writing.

*The epistemic influence.* Although the idea of epistemic writing, or writing to learn, has already been addressed, it deserves further attention in the section on writing influences because of its ability to make meaning. Researchers view the process of writing as a method of creating meaning through the authority of the preceding text (McCutchen, 1984; Spivey, 1990). Writers often do not know what they are going to write until they are engaged in the act of writing. In this case, textual cues can be helpful in directing the nature of information to be included, organizing it once it is included, and providing knowledge about the relationships among and within “chunks” of text (Spivey, 1990). Furthermore, “the writer also connects textual content with what he or she already knows, generating content that adds to, that goes beyond, the content explicitly cued by the text” (p. 259).

As writers compose, they construct relationships between pieces of information in order to make the resulting text meaningful for the reader. However, not all texts will successfully create meaning, indicating the need for certain guiding principles writers should consider while in the process of writing. DeBeaugrande and Dressler (1981) offered one possible model through their proposed seven standards of textuality, namely *cohesion*, *coherence*, *intentionality* (of the writer), *acceptability* (the reader’s attitude towards the text), *informativity*, *situationality*, and *intertextuality*, (relationship between the current and other previously encountered texts). These standards direct the kind of information writers include and determine how it is included, a point which is particularly salient when one considers all of the potential textual choices *not* made by the author. Of the possibilities, there is something meaningful about the final text and the process used to reach it.

## **An Exploration of Writing in Context**

Based on the notion that individuals and the factors that influence them (motivation, cognition, emotion, attitude, beliefs, etc.) along with the text and the factors that influence it (task constraints, the reader, the community the writer is attempting to emulate, etc.) are all equally important considerations when writers write, writing teachers face a complicated job: how to teach writing in a way that is meaningful and accounts for these multiple influences. This section explores the foundations of the idea for writing in context as well as the current applications of the theory to experiential learning and service-learning. The section also describes the basic components of these latter pedagogical concepts, especially the role of reflection as the link between the experience and the classroom.

### ***The Foundation***

The work of two important researchers, Dewey and Vygotsky, is often applied to principles of good teaching practices. Each man held a vision of the learners as active participants in their learning who negotiate social factors in an effort to identify experience and purpose (Dewey) and to direct their learning (Vygotsky).

Specifically, Fishman (1993) and Giles and Eyler (1994) identify several Deweyan beliefs that direct pedagogical principles: (1) student learning is most effective when students are actively involved in their own learning; (2) learning is best when it is intrinsically driven; (3) students develop better writing when they must write for multiple audiences, especially those other than the professor and their peers; and (4) experience is educationally beneficial only when teachers employ critical analysis and reflexive thought. Essentially, “there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education” (Dewey, 1938, p. 20). However, this “does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative” (p. 25). Giles (1990) suggested that this caveat led Dewey to construct two guiding philosophies, The Principle of Continuity, which assesses an experience for its educative value in terms of its effect on growth and development and thereby directing the experience, and The Principle of Interaction, which states that the

experience should represent a “goodness of fit or ‘transaction’” between internal and external aspects of the experience and thereby implies “an interaction between the subject and the environment” (p. 258).

The work of Vygotsky (1978) can be considered in conjunction with these theories because he explained how teachers could “direct the experience” and enhance the “interaction” through a zone of proximal development. The zone has been defined as knowledge beyond a student’s current capabilities but that is within reach through the interaction of “more competent and responsive others” who serve as guides in the student’s experience (Pressley & McCormick, 1995, p. 230). Known as scaffolding, the interaction guides and assists the students during the construction of knowledge within the zone. To introduce information beyond the scope of the zone is to create boredom when the information is already known or potential failure when the information is too foreign.

### ***Current Applications of the Research***

Taken together, these two theorists have contributed much to our understanding of the most appropriate forms of teaching so that students may meaningfully interact with and within their environment. When applied to the teaching of writing, we are introduced once again to the importance of the “individual in context” (Pintrich, 2000, p. 223). A great deal of research has been devoted to the need for writing in context (Anderman & Anderman, 2000; Bacon, 2000; Bartholomae, 1988; Bizzell, 1982; Brandt, 1992; Bruffee, 1993; Faigley, 1985; Flower, 1989; Flower, 1996). As a writing consideration, context provides cues to cognition (Flower, 1989), scaffolds learning (Applebee, 1985), and determines the direction of the writing task. Because writers must consider their purpose and their audience when writing, it is helpful for the task to be as appropriate and realistic as possible.

Based on the belief that learning is situated in and shaped by the environment in which it occurs (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1984), educators have been enjoined to construct environments that are as authentic and supportive to a student’s learning as possible because “there is no guarantee that students’ *knowledge* about texts

acquired in one setting would be available to them when they undertake writing tasks in other settings” (Bacon, 2000, p. 590, emphasis hers). As transfer is one of the main goals of education, the possibility of the learning not applying to life beyond college is quite unacceptable. The concept of situated learning addresses this problem by placing the students in the environment in which they are intended to perform.

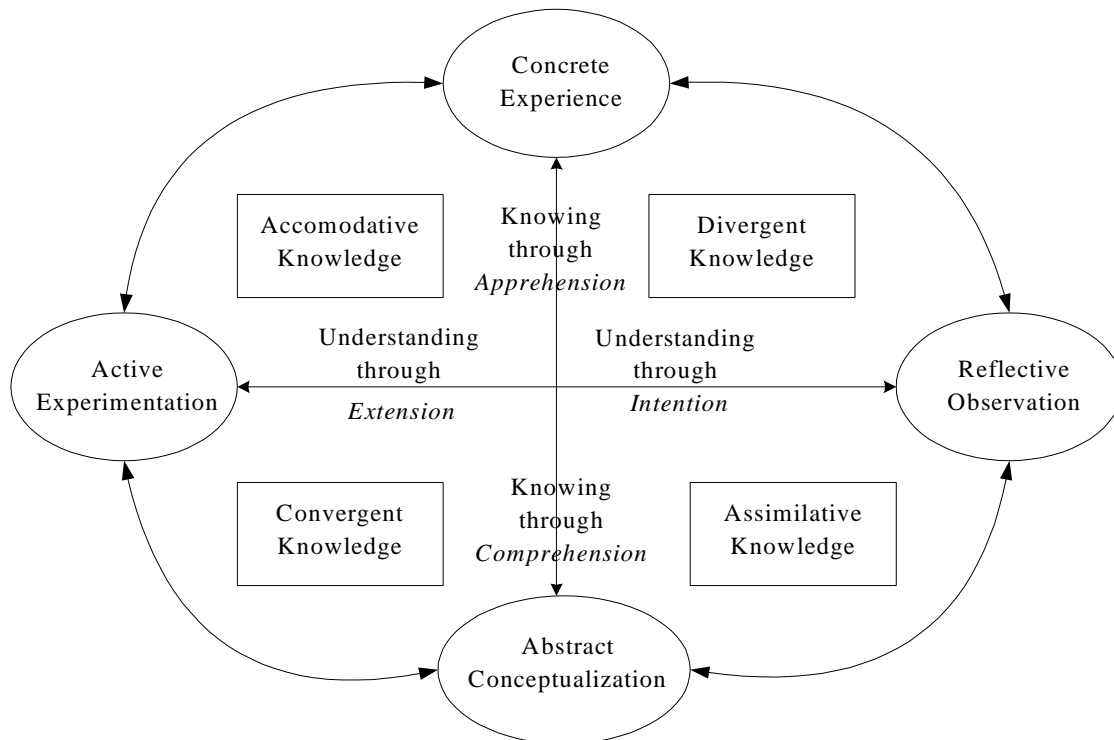
One of the main reasons to make learning authentic is because educators hope that students can one day become members of a particular community of practice, otherwise known as discourse communities (Bacon, 2000; Bartholomae, 1988; Bizzell, 1982; Bizzell, 1992). It is in the boundaries of the discourse community that members are distinguished from nonmembers as those seeking membership attempt to use the language of the community (Bruffee, 1993). In this time of what Rogoff (1990) called legitimate peripheral participation, nonmembers learn what it means to be a member of a particular community and how language shapes their potential membership: “Through language, members of a discourse community learn to ‘carve out’ the world in similar ways; they develop similar ‘anticipations’ about external reality” (Prawat & Floden, 1994, p. 318). Similarly, “concepts, ideas, theories, the world, reality, and facts are all language constructs generated by knowledge communities and used by them to maintain community coherence” (Bruffee, 1986, p. 777).

However, students do not have the chance to learn the language of a particular community through legitimate peripheral participation unless they can learn how to participate in the community and then practice what they have learned. The classroom, if properly constructed, affords educators the opportunity to accomplish both tasks: “Ideally, we can offer students *both* opportunities to write outside the classroom, to experience socialization into multiple discourse communities, *and* opportunities within the classroom to critically reflect upon their experiences as rhetors” (Bacon, 2000, p. 607, emphasis hers).

### ***Understanding Experiential Learning***

One way to accomplish this dual representation is through the aforementioned experiential learning. Through experiential learning, educators can offer students the authentic learning environment within the context of interest that is deemed so important. Yet understanding how experiential learning creates learning is more difficult to identify.

One commonly discussed view of how learning occurs is Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle (see Figure 2.1). Based on Lewin's 1951 theory and summarized by Atherton (2002), the Learning Cycle begins with *Concrete Experience*, which is then followed by *Reflective Observation* about the experience and how it is personally applicable, producing necessary generalizations, conclusions,



**Figure 2.1: Adaptation of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle**

and *Abstract Conceptualization* about the experiences, which can then be tested through *Active Experimentation* to then be applied again to a future *Concrete*

*Experience*. A link between *Concrete Experience* and *Abstract Conceptualization* produces two ways of knowing: through *comprehension*, “reliance on conceptual interpretation and symbolic representation,” or *apprehension*, “reliance on the tangible, felt qualities of immediate experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). A link between *Reflective Observation* and *Active Experimentation* leads to ways of understanding (Atherton, 2002) or transformation (Kolb, 1984) through *intention*, internal reflection, or *extension*, actively processing elements of the external world.

The ways of knowing and understanding lead to four basic forms of knowledge that echo the works of Piaget and Hudson (1967). *Assimilative* knowledge, grasped through *comprehension* and transformed through *intention*, attempts to conform the experience into “precise meaning” and its “critical attributes” (Kolb, 1984, p. 146), while *accommodative* knowledge, grasped through *apprehension* and transformed through *extension*, attempts to understand the general applications of the experience from its precise and detailed attributes. Divergent knowledge, grasped through *apprehension* and transformed through *intention*, is based on a more creative, broadly applied interpretation or “sense” of the experience, while *convergent* knowledge, grasped through *comprehension* and transformed through *extension*, produces the concrete, right or wrong, facts on the experience.

Whether or not current practitioners endorse the model in its entirety, they generally support the need for pre-reflection, action, and post-reflection in order to process each aspect of the experience. Of general use within this study is the idea that information, generated from experience, undergoes a transformation to produce conceptual and concrete knowledge about the experience and the individual’s place within it. Additionally, the model makes a contribution to how students learn (discussed later), although some of Kolb’s theories may misrepresent the work on which they were founded, such as Piaget’s notion of accommodation and assimilation (Atherton, 2002).

### ***Service-Learning in the Literature***

As a specific form of experiential learning that is based on the same basic principles, service-learning emphasizes the role of service as a context for change. Briefly, service-learning creates the opportunity for students to learn the content of the classroom by performing a service within the community and reflecting on the impact of their participation. The concept is of particular interest to the study because of its implementation within the assignments of the course under investigation. Because of its classification as experiential learning, the resulting information about service-learning applies to both terms.

Once used to urge educators to use service-learning within the classroom environment or to suggest successful implementation advice, the current literature tends to focus on the outcomes and, specifically, the varied benefits of this educational practice. One possible explanation for the lack of uniformity in the reported outcomes is because different faculty members implement service-learning in their classrooms for different reasons, and differences in implementation produce different effects (Shumer & Belbas, 1996). The other explanation is that service-learning has the potential to impact so many aspects of student development that the goal of many researchers is to seek out and report all that may be involved. For example, McEwen (1996) reported increased intellectual, moral, civic, psychosocial, identity, and career-related developments. Additionally, in the pivotal book *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?*, Eyler and Giles, Jr. (1999) named the following benefits: active knowledge construction, perspective transformation, personal and interpersonal development, leadership development, increased critical thinking skills, heightened engagement, and enhanced curiosity.

Despite the many potential benefits, some researchers have adopted the stance that the best way to understand what is going on in service-learning is to isolate and investigate certain aspects of the outcomes. One general consensus reached through both quantitative and qualitative studies is that service-learning produces greater moral development, personal social responsibility, and civic values (Batchelder &

Root, 1994; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; Gray et al., 1996; Kendrick, 1996; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Myers-Lipton, 1994, 1996; Parker-Gwin, 1996; Sax & Astin, 1997). Similarly, the literature often cites an increased awareness of and sensitivity to multiculturalism or cultural identity as a byproduct of service-learning (Mintz & Hesser, 1996; Ortiz, 2000; Rhoads, 1998).

It seems natural that many studies would focus on these issues because they symbolize that which makes service-learning different from interning or even volunteering, namely the application of course concepts within a social, service-oriented environment through active participation in that environment. Yet, these outcomes, while rewarding, do not represent the core of what could make service-learning or experiential learning so rewarding to educators and students alike. As Zlotkowski (1996) stated, “Without abandoning the moral and civic concerns fundamental to the very concept of service-learning, advocates must begin investigating more serious and intellectual capital...Only in this way, I believe, will the movement achieve the critical mass necessary to make itself felt throughout higher education” (p. 25).

When one starts investigating these areas of interest, it becomes obvious that little research exists on exactly how service-learning enhances learning. While Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle contributed to the discussion, it did not identify or clarify potential student outcomes. A few studies have attempted to show the impact of student participation on source content (Cohen & Kinsey, 1994; Gray et al., 1996; Kendrick, 1996; Markus, Howard, and King, 1993), yet these studies focused on what was learned rather than *how* the students learned from service-learning.

Most of what is known or recognized about student cognitive developments comes from Eyler and Giles, Jr. (1999). They stated that students report: better application of concepts, deeper understanding, greater identification with the value of the course material, increased critical thinking capabilities, and enhanced strategic knowledge. In fact, the students in their nationally based study “had a deeper, more complex understanding of issues and felt more confident about using what they were



learning. Service made the subject matter come to life and put them inside the subject matter rather than outside, as abstract, disinterested observers” (p. 70).

As with many studies in this field, however, the results are limited by the fact that they are based on student self-report data rather than a structured investigation of learning outcomes. Part of this desire to report student perspectives is understandable because how is one supposed to gather information about student learning without soliciting the students’ involvement? Still, to be considered a legitimate pedagogy, research must employ other forms of assessment to determine how students learn from service-learning and avoid a misconception in the field that “anecdotal evidence is stronger than empirical data” (Fertman & Buchen, 1994, p. 14).

*The structure of service-learning programs.* Producing the kind of outcomes reported in the field of service-learning (especially transformative learning) requires more than placing students in applied, service-related environments. Eyler and Giles, Jr. embraced “the position that service-learning should include a balance between service to the community and academic learning and that the hyphen in the phrase symbolizes the central role of reflection in the process of learning through community experience” (1999, p. 4). This sentiment mirrors a concept so central to the success of service-learning that most researchers often include the three components (service, learning, and reflection) within their definition. For example, the Commission on National and Community Service, a leading source on service-learning, defined this teaching practice as a method:

- (A) under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully-organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community;
- (B) that is integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provides structured time for the student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the actual service activity;

- (C) that provides students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
- (D) that enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community and helps foster the development of a sense of caring for others. (National and Community Service Act of 1990)

It is the combination of service and learning as mediated through reflection that allows a student to be both a member of the classroom and a participant within the community outside of the classroom. The service aspect places students within the community often within some role or capacity that permits them to perform some needed act to satisfy a community need. In terms of the composition classroom, Deans (2000) suggested that this service can occur in one of three ways: writing for the community, writing about the community, and writing with the community. The difference between these three alternatives is how involved the community client is in the writing that students perform as part of the service-learning project. For example, in the first scenario, the students could go into an agency in need and write a newsletter for the client that would be mailed to the client's constituents. In the second scenario, the students might go and work in a soup kitchen and then come back to the classroom to write an essay about the experience or a particular issue such as homelessness. In the final scenario, students and the community representatives work together to produce a product that neither group could do alone. The Community Literacy Center, which represents the combined efforts of Carnegie Mellon University and the Community House in Pittsburgh, is such a project.

Without the concept of learning integrally related to the service, the students in these projects would simply be ambassadors of good will rather than learners. In fact, service without learning is, by definition, volunteering. It is the concept of learning that allows the student to practice what he or she is learning in realistic settings. Students often say that there is a difference between learning in theory and learning through practice. For example, one student in my pilot study alluded to this

difference: "I learned I really didn't pay attention to my audience before this kind of class. I learned how to judge their [the audience's] expectations, what they are looking for, what they want, how they want it. I have learned a lot about writing for other people and that is usually who you are writing for anyway. You are not writing in your own diary." This learning occurs because students are asked to apply the principles learned in class to a real-world situation, giving them important insight into the kind of work they will be doing once they leave the academy.

The final component of service-learning and experiential learning asks students to think about and articulate the relationship between service and learning. Appropriately labeled reflection, this concept links the other components by requiring students to consider actively the action they have been involved with and how it affects their knowledge. The relationship between action and reflection relates back to the principles of Dewey, who advocated for the need for active experimentation *and* reflective thought. One cannot occur without the other. In fact, applications of this theory to the practice of service-learning suggest just how interrelated the notions are: "Service-learning is based on the pedagogical principle that learning and development do not necessarily occur as a result of the experience itself but as a result of a reflective component explicitly designed to foster learning and development" (Jacoby, 1996, p. 6). Thus, just as the concept of transformative learning was central to this study, reflection as the enabler of this transformation became central to the investigation.

### **The Epistemic Benefits of Reflection**

A logical extension of any discussion on experiential learning is the role of reflection as a facilitating agent of change. As previously mentioned, reflection is the piece that connects the experience to the resulting learning, thereby enabling students to make sense of what they have encountered. Within my study, reflection serves as a subject of interest and as a way of generating learning, by having students make inferences about their writing and generally process what they experienced during the course through journal entries, questionnaires, and interviews. Of particular interest

were the written forms of reflection, namely the journal entries and questionnaires because of their emphasis on writing and the opportunity they created for metawriting. Pennebaker (1997) discussed how the act of writing, and specifically journaling, helped those negotiating the effects of a traumatic experience deal with and make sense of the experience. How might written reflection apply to more general experiences?

Eyler et al. (1996) suggested that how reflection is used in the classroom could make a difference in the learning that occurs. They, therefore, offered four principles of reflection to aid with implementation: continuous (an on-going part of the experience and, more generally, a student's education), connected (to the classroom and the action through thought), challenging (pushes the students in new ways), and contextualized (appropriate for the situational context).

Regardless of how it is implemented, the benefits of reflection are numerous and encompass all aspects of a student's development. Reflection encourages students to examine discrepancies and similarities between their personal and academic lives, identify affective responses to any differences, direct their cognitive processes to produce more critical learners, and motivate students to question and potentially change the academic and linguistic principles taught within their schools (Harris, 1990). It also causes students to "concretize abstract thought...leading to deeper grasp of course material" (CampusCompact, 1993, p. 7) Additionally, what Peck et al. (1995) call critical theory can prepare students for change by asking them to "examine their positions and assumptions about the world" (p. 205).

Freire (1969) also weighed in on what he believed to be the benefits of reflection:

Human beings are active beings, capable of reflection on themselves and on the activity in which they are engaged. They are able to detach themselves from the world in order to find their place in it and with it. Only people are capable of this act of "separation" in order to find their place in the world and enter in a critical way into their own reality. "To enter into" reality means to look at it objectively, and apprehend it as one's field of action and reflection. It means to

penetrate it more and more lucidly in order to discover the true interrelations between fact and observation (p. 105).

Yet what is it about reflection that makes it so influential to student learning? Bruffee (1986) offered his response to the question: “The human mind is equipped with two working elements, a mirror and an inner eye. The mirror reflects outer reality. The inner eye contemplates that reflection. Reflection and contemplation together are what, from this cognitive point of view, we typically call thought or knowledge” (p. 776).

More specifically, however, the benefits of written reflection can be explained through epistemic writing. Recall that the belief in this area is that “writing is crucial for learning” (Schumacher & Nash, 1991). Through writing “the individual comes to see what was not previously seen, fine tuning existing meanings with language” (Kucer, 1985, p. 323).

Some researchers stated how writing influences learning more explicitly. Because writing requires the conscious exploration of a text’s content (Odell, 1980) and establishes personal involvement with the ensuing material, the nature of the process can produce the forced integration of ideas, provide immediate feedback on the results (Emig, 1977), and refine, detect, and establish relationships between ideas on paper (Emig, 1977; Kelly, 1995; van Nostrand, 1979). Furthermore, individuals increase their understanding through writing (van Nostrand, 1979) when they have to develop an interpretation for an argument that is contrary to their understanding (Schumacher & Nash, 1991). In addition to dissonance, writing tasks inherently ask writers to address “what if” questions, make comparisons through analogical thinking, translate new information, and wrestle with metaphorical content, all of which Schumacher and Nash (1991) felt helped increase a student’s understanding.

Some researchers have even identified the influence of certain forms of writing because, as Odell discovered in 1987, different forms of writing require different cognitive processes. Langer and Applebee (1987) found that writing in the form of notes and responses to questions helped students recall discrete facts and facilitated

conceptual understanding and the establishment of relationships among ideas. Sternglass (1993), however, endorsed the belief that “analytic writing is the strongest contributor to learning, especially if learning is thought of as the ability to discover new ideas” (p. 238).

Regardless of the form of writing used, it seems that epistemic writing is beneficial to students. For example, the students in a study by Hilgers et al. (1999) indicated that, for them, writing led to learning, influenced their thinking, made them probe ideas more deeply, helped them internalize argumentation principles, and increased their confidence. Kelly (1995) also demonstrated that writing stimulates discovery, encourages a deeper processing that permits later recall, draws knowledge and new concepts to students’ attention, and focuses the attention to new data and ideas. Thus, research has shown that writing can stimulate the intellect and motivation of students by giving them the opportunity to learn through writing, especially through reflection, which allows them to gain additional insight into realities external to them.

### **Measuring Good Writing or Writing Improvements**

Once the outcomes of epistemic writing and reflection have been elucidated, it is helpful to understand how educators might recognize the benefits within the students’ texts or their reports of their learning. Before this can be accomplished, however, we must first recognize some commonly accepted goals for teaching writing.

#### ***Goals of Writing Instruction***

One of the main themes in the study has been the importance of creating the appropriate atmosphere for learning. This goal is the result of a basic pedagogical principle that what students learn should serve them beyond the scope of a class. The purpose of learning is not for students to perform well on a test. Tests attempt to assess students’ learning so that their new knowledge may be used appropriately once they complete a course. The need for transfer becomes especially important in the writing classroom because a student’s writing experience and ability is not the result

of one course but rather a lifetime of interaction with text. Thus, writing instructors should hope that what they teach students would add to that body of knowledge and experiences.

Within the literature, the teaching goals seem to follow a similar trend as the changing writing perspective discussed earlier, moving from a focus on the cognitive to a more holistic view of learning. For example, Cranton (1994) mentioned that the educational focus had shifted from a goal of memorization to a goal of critical thinking because students should know how to think. Flower (1989) said that writing should be about the discovery of ideas and “helping writers understand themselves as constructors of meaning within a social and cultural context” (p. 284). Finally, Elbow (1991) said that, as writing teachers, we should encourage discourse “that tries to render experience rather than explain it” because: “Life is long and college is short. Very few of our students will ever have to write academic discourse after college...In my view, the best test of a writing course is whether it makes students more likely to use writing in their lives” (Elbow, 1991, p. 136). Each of these views reflects a growing emphasis on the desire to make learning meaningful for students.

### ***What Learning May Look Like Textually***

With certain pedagogical goals in mind, the discussion now turns to what the resulting text might look like when a student learns. Research in this area includes case studies that illustrate how writers improve (Baxter Magolda, 2000; Sternglass, 1993) and the need for improvements. The National Center for Education Statistics (1997) revealed that 80% of eleventh graders in the United States can produce focused, clear task responses, but fewer than one third can produce complete responses with ample enough supporting evidence, and only 2% can effectively write, support, and discuss their findings. Considering the goal of teaching is often critical and applied thinking, this finding poses some serious issues for college instructors.

Fortunately, however, writers do improve and their texts provide evidence of their development. “Good” textual examples “facilitate a reader’s ability to draw connections by making the nature of events and ideas and their relationships more

apparent” (Beck et al., 1995, p. 220) and present multiple voices that depict the “simultaneous presence of social, cultural, and political influences” (p. 224) composing the writer’s viewpoint and perceptions of the world. The writer’s focus within the text changes from internal reflection to a more socially aware position or focus on the “other” (Gere & Sinor, 1997; Schutz & Gere, 1998). Bruning and Horn (2000) suggest that improved writers are also able to identify their own voices as well as their individuality, character, and goals. They also learn how to write in a multidimensional voice, which produces different voices for different occasions.

From a more cognitive perspective, improved writers are able to conduct purposeful composing, which relates generalizations to supporting evidence, and engage in critical thinking (Smagorinsky, 1991). Additionally, they are able to produce: different goals, invoked strategies, selected knowledge for inclusion, identification of appropriate organizing principles (ranging from “simple summary, to free response, to careful synthesis, to interpretations of the reading for a purpose of the writer’s own”), and an effective interpretation of the situation mediating each of these responses (Flower, 1989, p. 289).

More generally, Mentkowski and associates (2000) identified several areas that detect “human potential” for what they call “learning that lasts.” Otherwise known as transformation, lasting learning produces growth in the following areas: intellectual and cognitive, specifically in one’s ability to define issues, think critically, perform thematic analysis, and progress in terms of the curriculum, moral judgment, integration of the self in context, and sustained learning after college.

When applied to writing, these outcomes appear similar to Schultz and Fecho’s (2000) *social contextual perspective on writing development*, which suggested that writing improvements are: “(a) reflective of social historical contexts, (b) variable across local contexts, (c) reflective of classroom curriculum and pedagogy, (d) shaped by social interactions, (e) tied to social identities, and (f) conceptualized as a nonlinear process” (p. 55). These developments could then be measured by three regulative principles: *efficiency*, which asks how concise is the text, *effectiveness*, or



how memorable and successful is the message, and *appropriateness*, or how well the ensuing text meets the situational intentions and the previously stated standards of textuality (DeBeaugrande & Dressler, 1981).

### **Conclusion**

I have reviewed the existing writing literature from a historical perspective and illustrated the preferred view intrinsic within my study. I also described what is meant by an authentic environment, especially in terms of service-learning, its basic components, and the crucial role of reflection, as well as important issues for writers to consider during the construction of meaning. Finally, I discussed the goals of teaching writing and how these may be realized within a student's text. Now, I will introduce the study itself in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

This chapter includes an overview of the study, justification for and an explanation of the methods and analysis used, and a discussion of how the study adheres to procedural integrity.

### **An Overview of the Study**

The methods used to collect data in this study represent a blend of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. This blend is appropriate because, as mentioned before, the research in the field of service-learning can no longer rely on self-report alone, so a quantified assessment of the students' writings should accompany their perceptions of what is going on during the writing process. However, quantitative methods in and of themselves would not be enough to produce the kind of results needed for this study. In addition, the qualitative methods in the study are an advancement over what has been done in the past because they combine the students' impressions with that of the teacher's, and they incorporate a variety of sources, from written reflection to interviews. Therefore, the chosen methods signify the most logical selection for this study, both because of the nature of the questions and because of the potential for the blended approach to create a comprehensive picture of what is occurring within this environment. Together, these approaches address the main research questions of this study, which are:

1. How might transformation appear when it occurs, or how can we deduce the presence of transformation in students' writing by analyzing students' formal written reports as well as their responses in journals, interviews, and questionnaires?
2. How does the reflective writing used in a service-learning course influence students' views of the world, of their learning and/or knowledge, and of themselves as writers?
3. How does metawriting influence students' understanding of text and their ability to produce it?

4. What are the factors that could facilitate or interfere with the role of written reflection as a transforming agent in any of the previous considerations?

### **Justification for the Use of Qualitative Methodology**

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested several reasons for conducting qualitative research. The first is preferences or experience of the researcher, to which I would also add the current research preference or trend in the field of interest. Although I would not say I have a preference for qualitative research, I both enjoy this kind of research and feel comfortable conducting it, especially within this context, due to my past experience with similar studies. Furthermore, there is so much research to be done in the field of service-learning that it seems logical to conduct general investigations in this area. Because questions concerning the relationship between writing reflection and student growth or development have not yet been addressed, then these questions represent the next step in the field, which introduces Strauss and Corbin's second and more pertinent point.

The authors suggested that one should engage in qualitative research if the nature of the questions dictates an exploratory approach. The questions to be asked within this study are open and exploratory, so qualitative research is merited. Previous literature has explained the importance of writing in learning, but the nature of this relationship is not specified, indicating the need for an open exploration of the issue.

Strauss and Corbin also mentioned that qualitative research should be used "to obtain the intricate details and phenomena such as feelings and thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods" (1998, p. 11). Many of the issues in this study fall into this category. The questions asked for insight from students and the professor about emotions, motivations, and thought processes that would be difficult to gain through anything other than interviews, questionnaires, or journal entries. These self-report methods offer a glimpse into the mind and emotions of a writer.

### **Justification for the Use of Quantitative Methodology**

As previously mentioned, the self-report methods can no longer be used in isolation if the merits of service-learning research are expected to be legitimate or at least persuasive to those in higher education. Thus, this study used quantitative methods to measure the quality of the students' texts. In this way, development throughout the semester was measured. Whether or not one considers the learning that occurred to be "transformative," these methods represent attempts to quantify the learning that is occurring. When combined with the qualitative results, the final picture revealed whether learning occurs and to what the students might attribute this learning. Furthermore, the use of quantitative methods allowed some comparisons between students to be made in an effort to illuminate who was or was not learning from this experience. The results have interesting implications for the field of service-learning.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Context***

This study involved a magazine writing course during the spring semester of 2002 at a private, religious college in Texas. Offered as a graduation requirement for junior and senior writing majors, this class was of special interest for several important reasons. The first and most obvious reason was because the course incorporated service-learning into a course on writing. Next, the course incorporated written reflection in the form of journal entries and written questionnaires to facilitate student learning and to capture learning as it occurred throughout the course of the semester.

Another important reason for the selection of this course was its structure. Within the semester, the students in the class produced four essays. The first essay asked the students to explore some personal aspect of their lives as students (why they came to this school, some experience that sets them apart, a campus activity they participate in, etc.) and submit the article for publication in a specified campus magazine. Whether or not the students' work was selected for publication, they had the

opportunity to write for the editor of the magazine, who served as a real-world audience in addition to providing valuable feedback.

The second assignment was the first of two service-learning projects. For this essay, students were asked to write for an online orientation magazine for incoming freshman. A similar project was attempted in a previous course taught by this same instructor, but the magazine was not yet available for the participating students or their “clients” to access, making the realization that a service was being performed difficult to conceive. Thus, this new project was more salient for the students because their work was automatically visible to the people for whom the service was intended, making the project more realistic. As with the previous project, an editor, who was also the Dean of Students for the university, reviewed this article.

In the third assignment, the students were asked to write a review of a club, a restaurant, or a band for a local magazine. During the course of the semester, however, the magazine went out of business. The students continued to write for the magazine’s audience and purpose, but the editor never saw the submissions and the students did not have a chance to be published as expected. Thus, this assignment served more as practice for writing this kind of magazine article than actual “real-world” experience.

The final assignment asked students to create a profile of a previous alum and submit it for publication in the online English writing major alumni magazine for their school. This article served as the second service-learning assignment because the students had direct contact with their alumni audience by interviewing them as the subject of the article, and the results benefited both the alumni clients and the university. An editor also reviewed this article and gave the students practical feedback relating to their chances for publication.

These assignments were promising because they all incorporated a realistic audience, yet only two of them technically qualified as service-learning projects, even though whether or not they actually fell under this definition when put into practice is a question for a later discussion. Thus, the difference between writing for an audience

and writing for a service-learning project was assessed. Additionally, the course structure allowed for student growth and reflection on this growth because the assignments were similar in nature (if not focus), so that differences due to assignment type were reduced. The essays also permitted me to observe any transformations that occurred because the end product in each instance was a written and immediately observable format. Because each topic was unique to the student and because each student had different experiences, these assignments alluded to what can be learned about individuals within the context of this shared environment.

The final reason this course was the focus of this study was because the writing included in the course served both as a measure for reflection and as an educational outcome. This allowed me to observe how reflection, including metawriting, influenced the students and their writing. It also offered a possible way to observe transformation as it occurs.

### ***Participants***

The study drew on the experience of both the students and the professor involved with the class under investigation. The class, which consisted of mostly junior and senior writing majors, signified one of the final courses the students must take before graduating, implying that any transformation was likely the result of this class because the students had already received extensive writing training up to this point in their education. Additionally, many of the students had taken a course before from this professor. Both of these facts indicate that any development that occurred in this class can be attributed to participation during the semester because previous writing experience and developments due to the professor were somewhat controllable.

Some students had more prior experience with magazine writing, but this differentiation contributed more to their confidence when approaching the tasks rather than their actual development. For example, one student in my pilot study indicated that she had taken four classes from this professor before and remembered that the teacher stressed the importance of audience in each one. However, the student stated

that she did not actually realize the importance of the audience members until she actually had to write for them (Deithloff, 2001).

Another important consideration for the students was whether or not they had previous experience with service-learning. This variable influenced how much students felt they were learning from the project and gave them insight on whether or not the specifics of this context (i.e., written reflection) were beneficial in producing results as compared to previous service-learning courses. Thus, how much exposure students had to service-learning was assessed during one of the first class meetings.

The professor of the course, who represented another study participant, had already taught several service-learning courses, including another magazine writing course, and she had had experience as a participant in several other campus projects. This was the first of two classes she taught this semester that incorporated a service-learning project. She had a preference for service-learning courses because, after teaching for many years, she felt that her recent inclusion of service-learning in her classroom had produced more salient benefits in the least amount of time for the students she taught. She stressed audience in many of her classes, but she said that they grasped the notion better when she engaged them with the audience for whom they were writing through these projects. She did not use service-learning in all of her classes though because she suggested that the course's learning objectives should decide whether or not she should implement the projects in her class. In her own words, her goals for this particular magazine writing class were:

Certainly one of my big objectives is that students submit work for publication. That students understand, are able to demonstrate their ability to write articles for a variety of publications and audiences shifting topics, shifting those audience topics, publications as need be. That they understand how to query an editor, how to work with an editor, how to take feedback from an editor, how to take multiple feedback from editors that may disagree, how to interview, how to revise numerous times, how to not necessarily write in their style but the magazine style, how to analyze a publication for things such as

style and paragraph length and how often quotes are used; all these elements go into magazine writing.

Based on the principles of grounded theory research that is the foundation of this study, Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that I should also profile myself as researcher and, therefore, a participant in this study. I, too, come to this situation with certain beliefs and assumptions that could have influenced the construction of meaning as it occurred in this context. I have taught four classes of Freshman Composition and two classes of a Topics in Writing course I created at the University of Texas at Austin. The course I designed was called The Rhetoric of Volunteerism, and it included a service-learning component because my interest in this area led to my implementation of a project within my own class. I have been very happy with the results of this project, based on the level of deep and complex analysis it generated in the work and the musings of my students, including the thoughtful essays the students were able to produce. Therefore, I acknowledge that I have a potential bias toward service-learning as beneficial, but my awareness of this tendency should help me greatly reduce its ability to complicate the study at hand.

### ***Procedure***

The process of data collection involved several different data sources and occurred in various stages. Each of these methods and their subsequent proceedings will be described as follows.

*Questionnaires.* In a recent article, Reed, Schallert, and Deithloff (2002) found the use of open-ended questionnaires to be helpful in elucidating the relationship between two internally-based processes: self-regulation and involvement (for both reading and writing). The students in the study were able to provide insightful details about their writing process, the strategies they used to stay involved, and other important but difficult to observe concepts. For this reason, plus the additional benefit of having a study on writing involve the writing process, one data source in this



current study asked students to respond to questions about their project writing and questions about their experiences in written questionnaires. Analysis of each questionnaire, class discussions, and student feedback led to the development of each subsequent questionnaire throughout the semester. I had some initial idea of the kinds of questions that would be asked in each period, but the students' responses, their struggles with the assignment, and journal entries dictated the kind of questions that actually appeared in each questionnaire.

In general, the questions addressed the students' writing processes, their opinions of how these processes changed throughout the semester, their impressions of what they were learning and/or experiencing, and several other topics. Some of the questions focused only on writing about writing to introduce the idea of metawriting into the study. The questions varied between open-ended and more structured questions so that students would have a chance to respond with undirected answers in some instances while focusing more on specific aspects of their learning, writing, transformation, etc. in others. In all, there were four questionnaires administered throughout the semester. The complete set of questionnaires may be viewed in Appendix A.

More specifically, Questionnaire 1, which was the given at the beginning of class for an initial assessment of the students and their entering perceptions or abilities, asked questions concerning the students background, past experience with service-learning, reasons for enrolling in the class, and other potential informative details. The questionnaire then asked several questions meant to capture the students' initial beliefs, such as: "What are your impressions of classes that incorporate service-learning within the curriculum? Why do you feel this way?;" "One goal of service-learning is the cause of "transformation" in those who participate. What does the term transformation mean to you? How would you know if it has occurred (i.e., what might it look like in your life or in your writing)?;" and "How much do you value improvements in your writing (i.e., it's really important, sort of important, not very important)? Indicate why you feel this way."

Questionnaire 2 coincided with the completion of their first assignment and was based on the results of the students' responses in the first questionnaire. Students produced interesting responses about transformation, reflection, and their development as writers, so I decided to explore these concepts a bit further and in a more directed manner. This led to the production of a five-point Likert-like scale that asked students to think about certain issues and indicate how "true of me" or "not true of me" the statements were. Words or phrases that appeared in quotes were in vivo codes based on the first questionnaire. Some sample statements were: "I think writing about my writing will help me 'understand' or 'grow;'" "I am comfortable with and/or encourage 'change,' whether it occurs within me personally or within my academic work;" "I think writing about my writing will 'produce new insight,' 'open my eyes,' or make me 'aware of differences;'" and "I believe reflection can produce transformation." The last portion of this questionnaire asked the students to rank some reported outcomes of transformation in terms of their importance and to answer two open-ended questions.

After the completion of the third assignment, which occurred slightly after the mid-semester mark, I administered Questionnaire 3. Up to this point, the students had also been responding to questions in their journals (discussed later). Some of the issues they were raising needed further and more pointed exploration, so Questionnaire 3 followed the same format as the second questionnaire. The goal of this questionnaire was to assess the students' perceptions of their learning in the course up to this point. Several students had also mentioned some struggles or concerns they were having, so I attempted to assess how common these issues were for the students. Sample statements for this questionnaire were: "I am confident about what I have written so far this semester;" "I will continue to pursue magazine writing after this class;" "The reflection components are helping me understand what is going on with my writing;" and "I feel like it is possible for my writing to change because of a class." The last part of this questionnaire asked students to rank the assignments

in terms of their salience and to respond in an open-ended fashion to what was helping them learn both in this course and generally.

Questionnaire 4 was administered at the end of class to assess the students' final impressions through open-ended responses. The questions in this questionnaire revisited several of the questions asked in Questionnaire 1 to observe any changes in the students' thinking or beliefs. Additional questions asked students to think about their progress (or lack thereof) this semester and attempted to gain information on any unanswered issues. Some questions were: "Remember that one goal of service-learning is to cause "transformation" in those who participate. What does the term transformation now mean to you?;" "Look at your first assignment for this semester. Now, look at your final assignment. What similarities do you see between the two texts in terms of your writing, your style, your approach, etc.? What differences do you see?;" "How beneficial was the service-learning project you worked on this semester?;" and "How did reflection impact your writing this semester (if at all)?"

The particular intervals used for the four questionnaires attempted to capture changes that may have been occurring in student learning or in their writing. Because these assessments are written documents, changes in grammar, style, or other writing issues were also evident.

To help students take the questionnaires seriously, completion of the questionnaires contributed to a daily grade score, which accounted for 10% of the student's grade. Students received credit if they completed a questionnaire and no credit if they did not. I kept track of who turned in these "assignments" so that student responses were kept confidential and the teacher simply was informed who had and who had not fulfilled the assignment.

*Student journals.* The second written data source collected was the students' journals. The professor asked the students to keep a journal throughout the semester. She decided on the kind of questions that might help students think about what they were learning and how they felt about exposure to a new genre of writing. Typical journal entries included impressions of what was happening in the class, emotions the

students might have been experiencing, frustrations or celebrations the students had, and general thoughts about their progress (or lack thereof) in the course. In all, there were eight entries (nine official entries, but Entry #1 was really Questionnaire 1. Appendix B contains a full list of the questions used during the semester, but as an example for *Journal Entry 4* the questions were: “Compare and contrast writing the Orientation articles with the [University name] Magazine articles: what’s different, what’s similar, what seems to be more a challenge, less of a challenge?” and for *Journal Entry 7*: “Why did you select the person you did for the Service Learning project profile? What expectations/fears do you have about the interview process? What sorts of questions do you want to ask your interviewee or do you think would be good general questions to ask? What do you consider to be the benefits of this project?”

Silcox (1995) and others like him justify the use of journals as a learning aid by claiming that they are “one of the most valuable and commonly used reflective activities” that allow students to “notice what is happening, think about experiences and reflect on their meaning and, from that, to grow” (p. 119). Thus, by observing the students’ journals throughout the semester, I could observe important occurrences in their growth.

To promote greater student sincerity towards the journal entries, the entries also counted toward the student’s daily grade. Students received full credit if they completed the assignment and answered the question. Even though the professor created the questions, she never saw the students’ responses because she wanted them to feel completely comfortable with however they chose to answer the question. Thus, I again was the one who kept track of who responded to each entry and who did not, and simply informed the teacher of the students’ completion of assignments.

*Student essays.* The final written data source was the student’s essays, or their responses to the assignments. These particular texts were important because they revealed important findings about what the students were learning about writing when they were taking the assignments seriously. As no one measure can adequately

determine a student's knowledge and as this knowledge may change over time, all of the assignment responses were considered in order to create a historical picture of the student's learning and progress in this class. Exactly how this was done will be discussed in the section on analysis.

*Interviews.* For the purpose of triangulation and to capture their impressions of their learning and the role of reflection in this process, each student also participated in an interview on their writing and their experiences before the completion of the last assignment (towards the end of the semester). Most of these interviews took place in the coffee shop of the student center on campus while a few were held before or after class at a small, tucked-away table outside the classroom. Students were asked to reflect on their progress during the semester, their impressions of the class, the value in the information they were learning, any recommendations they might have for future classes, my role in the class, etc. To promote honesty in the students' answers, links between the students and their responses were kept confidential. The professor was informed about any potential problems, but exactly who said what was never revealed.

A secondary but important source for interviews was the professor of the course. The questions addressed to her involved her plans for the students, how she felt about their progress, how she assigned each grade, and ultimately how she felt the students accomplished her intended goals for the course, the essays, the service-learning project, and the reflexive components. It was important to determine if she and the students shared similar views about what the students were experiencing because vision discrepancies could have impacted the effectiveness of the class. Also, the professor, in essence, served as a judge on the students' writing quality (other measures will be explained later). She saw each student's work and graded this work according to a particular set of criteria. The grade was important in determining whether or not she felt each student learned something in the class, but her scores also revealed how she viewed each student's progress. Therefore, questions addressing why she grades the way she does and whether or not she feels the students are

learning about (or improving) their writing permitted a consistent understanding of where the students stood and what they learned. It was also interesting to know her perceptions for what made a student successful in her course. These perceptions were later compared to the quantitative measure of the students' writing quality, which will be discussed later.

*Observation.* The final method used to gather data in this study was daily observations of the course. I sat in on every class and took notes about general occurrences, classroom activities, relationships between students, additional instructions made during class, and any other details that seemed relevant to the writing environment or the students' abilities to produce their assignments. This allowed me to become a participant observer and made me an integral part of the classroom environment, which helped to establish rapport with the students and made my presence not so unusual. In this manner, I was able to gain the students' trust and interact with them in a more familiar way, thereby creating the opportunity for more credible results.

### ***Analysis***

At the end of data collection, I was left with several different forms of raw data: essays, audiotapes, notes, journal entries, and questionnaires. In order to simplify the analysis process, I converted all forms that were not already in written format into text through transcription. I also took notes during observations and interviews on what had occurred during those sessions (mannerisms of the students, comfort level, environmental details such as noise, etc.). I was then ready to begin interpreting the raw data.

*Assessing the questionnaires, journals, interviews, and observation entries.* Using the principles of grounded-theory, I conducted open, axial, and selective coding to interpret the results of my data sources. During this process, I looked for a central phenomenon and the process involved with this phenomenon to capture the results and the possible relationship among the results as they emerged. Analysis for this portion of the data was conducted in two phases. The first phase looked at responses

between students for each journal entry, questionnaire, the interviews, and observation entries. General themes and trends were established across students during this stage of the analysis. Then, to determine changes within individual students, I looked at each student's responses and how these responses changed throughout the semester. Thus, I could observe both general trends in the data and specific changes among individual students.

*Identifying transformation in the essays.* To determine qualitatively transformation in the students' writing, I compared their first essay to their final essay. These two essays were of particular interest because they represented the first and last writing efforts for the students. More importantly, however, the assignments were similar in nature. Each of the assignments asked the students to produce a different kind of magazine article (personal, informative, evaluative, and descriptive). The assignments required the students to use similar skills, but for different purposes. The different focuses often masked the overall similarities among all of the assignments. Assignments 1 and 4, however, drew on similar skills and intentions for the piece. Both required students to tell personal stories, either about themselves (Assignment 1) or about their interviewee (Assignment 4). Therefore, students had to be very selective about the kind of information they included and how they portrayed this information. The goal in both pieces was to make the individual's experiences "come alive" for the reader and to "show" the story rather than "tell" the story. The concept of being descriptive enough to present the information in a clever and approachable manner while adhering to the interests of a specific audience and a strict word limit was difficult to grasp. Therefore, by looking at these two assignments, one would be able to determine whether or not a student improved according to these criteria and several others that were important throughout the semester (strong lead, good hook, nice use of language, correct grammar, inclusion of pertinent information, etc.).

I hoped this technique in and of itself would illustrate whether or not a student had improved during the semester. When coupled with the students' approach to the

task and how the paper was written, I was able to get a greater picture of whether or not the student was transformed in addition to improving their skills. For example, a student who exhibited characteristics of being transformed would write a better paper in a more sophisticated manner than she or he had previously been capable of producing. The kind of information the student chose to include to “make the story come alive” would represent a different way of perceiving what it means to create an effective story. If the student incorporated certain personal characteristics, preferences, or details in a linguistically sophisticated way, then the student would produce not only a better writing sample but also a more stimulating article that effectively reached its intended audience and accomplished the intended goal. Thus, I looked for improvements in the paper according to certain criteria established by the professor in emphasized points throughout the semester, and determined whether or not the improvements represented changes in perspective or approach to writing. This process is similar to how one might “grade” a paper for a course.

*Assessing the text quantitatively.* Based on the idea that “any individual’s writing ‘ability’ is a sum of a variety of skills employed in a diversity of contexts, and individual ability fluctuates unevenly among these variables” (Writing Assessment, p. 2), this study employed a method of assessment known as holistic scoring on the students’ essays. Elliot et al. (1990) described holistic scoring in the following terms:

To view a sample of writing holistically is to attempt to view the writing as more than the mere sum of its elementary parts. In considering a sample of writing from a holistic perspective, readers do not judge separately the singular factors--treatment of topic, selection of rhetorical methods, word choice, grammar and mechanics--that constitute a piece of writing. Rather, raters are asked to consider these factors as elements that work together to make a total impression on the reader. It is this total impression that is sought in holistic scoring. (17)

To make this assessment, I applied the scale used by the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) on the Written Portion of the Exam (see Appendix C) to each



student's essay writing quality after each assignment. I used this scale to determine where each student stood after each assignment, to make clear comments on the reasoning behind the determination, and to rank each student's performance as many students scored within the same scale level, making differences among them difficult to distinguish. Then, an independent rater, used to test for the reliability of holistic scores (Erwin, 2000), also assessed, commented on, and ranked the essays. Once the essays were ranked independently (interrater reliability was .91, .94, .92, and .88 for each assignment), the two judges then met to rank the essays together. In this manner, the raters established one clear set of rankings for each assignment without any discrepancies or initial bias between raters. These scores and ranks were then compared to the grades the professor assigned to the papers. Because the assessments used different scales (levels versus numerical grades), comparisons were informal and used strictly to identify similarities and differences in student assessment between these two methods rather than make any decisive comparative statements.

I chose this particular scale for two main reasons. First, the theoretical principles emphasized in the assessment, or anchor points (see Appendix C), resemble my personal philosophy for what "skills" should be emphasized. In response to a frequently asked question pertaining to what skills are measured, the GRE website (<http://www.gre.org/stuques.html>) states the following:

The GRE Writing Assessment gives you the opportunity to display your critical thinking and analytical writing skills. It assesses your ability to articulate and support complex ideas, analyze an argument, and sustain a focused and coherent discussion. It is not a test of specific content knowledge, and there is no single best way to respond.

While some of these points needed further definition with clear, distinct criteria for each particular assignment to increase interrater reliability (Huot, 1990), this scale nicely determined the writing quality of each student's essays. Once determined, the essay quality was compared over time to see if the students improved with each essay. When improvements did occur, I looked at the essays and the corresponding

comments to see if differences could be attributed to “the development of revised assumptions, premises, ways of interpreting experience, or perspectives on the world by means of critical self-reflection” (Cranton, 1994, p. xii), known as transformative learning, as determined by the reasoning a student uses in expressing his or her critical thinking and analytic writing skills. For example, a student could make an argument that entering freshmen are more concerned with the social aspects of college rather than grades. In a later paper, the student could revise this position to include the motivation for why some students have this focus and others do not. The developments in this later paper would reflect more critical and analytic thinking. They would also indicate (in this case) the presence of revised assumptions as a result of exposure and, possibly, subsequent reflection on this exposure. This kind of development tended to show up in journal entries as well because students would comment on how they approached certain papers differently from others, or they would indicate changes in their perceptions, their writing, etc. Thus, I was able to pair the quantitative results with those determined qualitatively to make inferences about student transformation, but how conclusive these inferences were remains to be seen.

The second and final reason I chose the GRE scale is because its reliability and validity had already been established:

In creating this assessment for the GRE Board, ETS followed a rigorous test development process that was guided by faculty committees representing different academic institutions, disciplines, and cultural perspectives. All topics passed stringent reviews for fairness and, in national field test trials, proved accessible and appropriate for entry-level graduate students across many disciplines and various cultural groups. Reading and scoring procedures were developed and refined to ensure scoring accuracy, fairness, reliability, and validity. (<http://www.gre.org/stuques.html>)

Thus, the scores produced with this scale seemed appropriate and adequate for my purposes.

## **Procedural Integrity**

### ***Quality Assurance in Qualitative Research***

To be considered sound research, this study adhered to certain canons of trustworthiness. In 1985, Lincoln and Guba offered alternatives to the conventional research terms, reliability and validity, by suggesting that qualitative studies should present credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These constructs, as they relate to this study, will be considered in turn.

The goal of *credibility* is to ensure that the study was conducted in a manner that accurately identified and described the subjects and the context involved in the inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). This objective can be realized in several ways. By observing the same course from the beginning to the end of the semester, this study avoided the biases and distortions that often accompany selective, incomplete observations. Also, through triangulation, which uses multiple data sources to illustrate how different approaches reach a single point, this study yielded a more comprehensive perspective by presenting a variety of techniques that arrived at similar conclusions, namely interviews, student journals, open-ended questionnaires, text analysis, and observation. Finally, peer debriefing (confirming analysis with a small group of colleagues) and member checks (confirming analysis with the study's participants) were employed to establish credibility of the data.

*Transferability* seeks to apply one set of findings to another context, which can often be difficult because researchers must replicate population standards, settings, and treatment arrangements (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). VanWijk and Sanders (1999) suggested that this problem could be overcome by "analyzing large text samples, preferably from writers who differ in proficiency and write about different topics in response to different instructions" (p. 64). This suggestion implies that the separate writers in my study could be used to establish transferability. While the students responded to the same instructions, the topics and how to proceed on the assignments were left to the student's own choosing, indicating that students made interpretations conducive to their particular circumstances, making each essay unique

to that student. Therefore, the students became separate entities with varying age, gender, writing proficiency, major, etc., making generalizations from between group comparisons possible. Thorough descriptions of observations and the relationships established within the text (known as thick description), I also helped future researchers or practitioners use my results to inform their own particular settings.

*Dependability*, a third canon of research quality, attempts to insure that, if the study were repeated under similar constraints and with similar participants, the results could be replicated with the understanding that the social world is always changing (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Through careful accounts of each phase in the study as maintained in an audit trail, this proposal adhered to this construct's guidelines.

Finally, *confirmability* stresses "whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 147). The key to this construct is to present data that can be traced to its sources and renderings that are sound and structurally coherent (Cleveland, 1998). This study modeled the suggestions presented here by sampling 20% of the data, including the results of the qualitative transformation comparison, and subjecting it to validation by another coder. I taught someone the meaning of my categories and/or criteria and had this person apply the categories to the data, thereby increasing the chance for the results to be replicated. In this way, the study will have met the criterion for confirmability.

### ***Quality Assurance in Holistic Scoring***

According to Huot (1990), the main questions concerning the reliability of holistic scoring outside of the scale itself relate to interrater reliability and the possibility of inflated estimates due to how discrepant scores are handled. Because "holistic raters are most influenced by the context and organization of a student's writing" (p. 207), the best way to avoid discrepant scores is to clearly establish the criteria used to make holistic determinations. Some researchers even suggest the use of a rubric to clarify the criteria (Erwin, 2000). Thus, I used the already clearly defined anchor points established by the GRE scale (see Appendix C) as criteria. I also provided the rater

with clear descriptions of the kind of essays that would fall within each score level to avoid any subjective differences before they occurred.

Furthermore, to minimize discrepancies between raters, I selected, trained, and determined the rater's ability to maintain a high degree of scoring accuracy (Erwin, 2000; Huot, 1990). Any scoring discrepancies resulted in the rescoring of the essay in question by both judges rather than averaging or rescaling the scores, which are methods that often lead to an inflation of interrater reliability estimates in holistic scoring. These techniques proved successful in that interrater reliability for each assignment was .91, .94, .92, and .88 respectively. Only the final essay had to be rescored after realizing that the judges had different ideas for the criteria on this paper. To resolve this issue, the judges met and discussed the objectives for the paper, how this translated into criteria, and what model papers might look like. Each essay was then rescored.

In terms of validity, Huot suggested, "Questions of validity really depend upon the purpose for which a holistic scoring session is conducted" (1990, p. 208). As previously stated, the GRE Board has already demonstrated both the reliability and the validity of the chosen scale. Therefore, my validity justification concerns my selection of the scale rather than the scale itself. The scale is appropriate because it measures the kind of skills represented by transformative learning. Of course, part of this study deals with the question of can one actually observe transformative learning, and the answer is rather complicated. Yet, it is fair to say that this scale determined at least a student's "ability to reason, marshal evidence to develop a position, and communicate complex ideas" (<http://www.gre.org/descriptor.html>) and detected how this ability changed from paper to paper. So whether or not this deep comprehension of "good writing" encompasses the whole-hearted learning, expressed by Dewey and echoed in the idea of transformative learning, is not as important as whether or not a student improved over time. Once development was established, I paired the results of the holistic assessment with the qualitative measures to determine the nature of this improvement. The results of these proceedings are discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The information within this chapter includes: a brief description of the classroom and the participants in the study, an explanation of the model that emerged from the data, a detailed discussion of three sub models within the overall model and their supporting components, and the story of three students as told by the model in its entirety.

### **The Classroom—A Portrait of Its Occupants and Its Daily Occurrences**

On the first day of class in January, 2002, 25 students (8 men and 17 women) slowly filed into the classroom. Each student chose where he or she wanted to sit among the five rows and three columns of two-people desks that faced the front of the comfortable room. This room was without the usual silence that accompanies a first day of class because 23 of the students, 12 seniors and 11 juniors, all seemed to know each other. Although two of the students who were pursuing Master of Language Arts (MLA) degrees did not interact with the rest of the class, even they seemed to have a familiarity with each other. After all, these mostly English Writing majors with a few communication students scattered among them had been taking a similar academic journey along the same prerequisite course plan for several years now. Most of them had even had a course with the professor before, which was obvious during the pre-class banter that was occurring between teacher and students. One had the feeling, however, that the scene was not an unusual one here on this private university campus. In fact, the student-professor relationship and the comfortable learning environment were two of the university's prized features most often advertised to incoming students.

Another interesting feature of this particular class was the amount of diversity in its students. Twenty students listed English as their native language and five listed Spanish. Six students said they were bilingual. Of the 25 students, 15 of them were of Spanish-language origin and 10 were of European descent; yet again, the diversity seemed to be a product of the university and its principles rather than a unique feature

of the classroom. Thus, the laid-back feeling and the faces of the students seemed to make this classroom an appropriate sample from the university's larger population.

Also of interest as the students settled into their places and to what would be their routine for the rest of the semester was what had brought them here. As previously mentioned, this class was required for English Writing majors, but they also came for other reasons. Only 12 of the students mentioned on their first questionnaire that they were here because they had to be. Ten students said they hoped to gain writing and publishing experience. Five wanted to improve their skills. Two felt it was an interesting topic, and one had enrolled after a favorable recommendation from a friend. Therefore, the group that now faced the professor was here out of duty, interest, and in some cases, a mix of the two.

At promptly 9:30 am, the students started to settle down and devote their attention to the professor, Paula<sup>\*</sup>, who asked the students to call her by her first name. This, and every class that would follow, began with roll call and a brief check on how the students were doing, both scholastically and personally. Paula would say, "I want to know what I am dealing with up here, so what is going on with you?" She then explained the purpose of the class as understanding the craft of writing for magazines and learning how to produce publishable work within the competitive and sometimes harsh environment of real magazine production. Her opening comments also reflected her personal goals for the class, which could be broken into three main areas: student personal improvement, course-based skill improvement, and career building. More specifically, she stated that her general goals were for the students "to become familiar with the basics of magazine writing: cover letters, query letters, working with editors, adjusting your style to the publication, analyzing a publication, how magazine writing is different from other forms of writing, interview and research components of magazine writing." She continued by encouraging the students to "find or improve upon your voice and style, become more attuned to language, improve your revision

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<sup>\*</sup> All names used within this study are changed to protect the identity of the participants.

skills, learn how to use quotes effectively, how to write a good lead/hook and conclusion, gain confidence, get published, vary your style depending on the publication, write to a word count, meet deadlines.”

The students responded to these remarks with nods of agreement and focused enthusiasm as the professor began her introduction to the course and what the students could expect from it. After all, these goals resembled those the students also had for the class (see Table 4.1). In their introduction paper, the first paper (ungraded) the students had to write, they explained who they were and what they hoped to get out of the class. Of course, several students mentioned the standard response that they “wanted a good grade,” but most of their responses reflected a deeper interest in polishing their craft personally, professionally, and academically. Thus, it seemed from the very beginning that students and the professor had similar intentions for the learning they hoped would occur throughout the semester.

<b>Table 4.1: Student Writing Goals—Long and Short Term (n=25)</b>	
<b><u>Categorized Responses</u></b>	<b><u>Number of endorsements</u></b>
Improve general or course-related writing skills	13
Learn to make writing more engaging/effective/informative	12
Produce publishable writing or “get published”	12
Pursue authorship or writing professionally	7
“Learn if this is what I want to do”	6
Learn to tailor the product to the audience	5
Produce marketable writing	5
Gain practical experience	4
“Get a good grade”	4
Improve knowledge of writing or of process	4
Produce well-written works	4
Learn to write on a variety of levels	3
“Gain confidence in my ability”	2
Learn to write more creatively	2
Note: Items that appear in quotation marks are <i>in vivo</i> codes, or categories created directly from student remarks.	



During the first day, Paula projected the class website on a screen to explain further what would be expected of the students. In terms of how they would be graded, she listed the semester's projects. There would be four main assignments: an article for an on-campus magazine worth 5%, an online article for incoming freshman and their parents worth 10%, an article for a magazine in the local community worth 10%, and a service-learning project, which was an article for an online alumni magazine worth 25%. In addition to these assignments, the students would also have to write a query letter (5%), cover letters (5%), a publication analysis (15%), and a writing journal (10%), and to participate in peer work and class discussions (15%). Paula said that she knew this was "a lot of work" but that it was "realistic" to the conditions a professional magazine writer would face on a daily basis. In addition, she explained that this was an upper-level class, so the students were expected to perform at an advanced level.

The two MLA students in the class would be treated a bit differently. These two women were in the class because of a new program the university had begun that allowed graduate students to take certain undergraduate classes that corresponded to their personal interests, under higher grading expectations. Never having had graduate students in class before and not receiving much guidance on how to interpret "higher grading expectations," Paula devised the following explanation for how the students would be assessed (as seen on the course website):

**NOTE TO MLA STUDENTS:** Because this course is already rigorous in scope, MLA students do not have any additional assignments; however your work--both in terms of writing and topic--is expected to be graduate level work. Your assignments must receive an 80 or higher to be considered passing. We will talk with you, and ask for your input, as to what this means for each assignment.

In terms of how both the assignments and the goals would be assessed, Paula, who had taught this course once every two years for the previous eight years,

explained in an interview that her means for identifying success in a student's accomplishments lay within the text they produce:

A good article is one that meets the needs of the magazine, its style, its audience. The writing should be vivid and engaging (details, quotes, scenes, voice) as opposed to simply telling or reporting. Active verbs, varied sentence structure, vocabulary and tone appropriate to the magazine/readership, a strong lead and conclusion, a strong element of informing, shorter paragraphs, and nonacademic writing are all elements I'm looking for.

In a more abstract sense, I'm looking for that leap forward in their understanding of writing for magazines—it's not academic writing, it's not newspaper writing, it's not creative writing—and the leap forward in their writing, where they take some risks, try something new (even if it fails; in my mind the success is that they took a risk, they tried).

There was a sense of fairness in the professor's chosen methods for measurement to which the students seemed to respond positively. During discussions after class, they privately acknowledged her reputation as a "tough grader," but one who gives great feedback that truly helps them understand how to improve their writing. In fact, the attention to detail was what had prompted several of the students in the class to select Paula as an advisor and several others to continue taking her classes, despite the graduation requirement. Interestingly, at least four of the 25 students were enrolled in two other of Paula's courses during this particular semester for a total of three courses. Interviews and informal discussions indicated that they respected her feedback and craved her critiques of their work "even though sometimes your paper looks like it is bleeding from all the red ink" (Tiffany, interview).

After an explanation of the course along with its objectives, assignments, and expectations, Paula introduced me, the final participant in this classroom environment. Together we explained the varied roles I would have in the class. First and foremost, I was a researcher attempting to gather information on writing, both in terms of reflection and the text being produced, in a service-learning classroom. This meant I would be "in charge" of the writing journal, including the questionnaires that

often substituted for journal entries. We explained that because the class incorporated a service-learning project (or two), reflection was a necessary and required element that would help them connect the service they were providing with the learning that was occurring. Thus, the focus of my research was naturally built into the course and my participation in the class would not place any additional burdens on them. The only difference, however, was that Paula, who normally reviews the writing journals, would not see the students' responses this semester because she "wanted the students to respond as honestly as possible and they may not talk about me or the class if they know I will see the response" (planning meeting). We also discussed the importance of confidentiality in any research project, which would be upheld by limiting the professor's access to the journals.

In addition to my role as researcher, Paula mentioned that I would also serve as a resident advisor of sorts to the classroom. We decided before the class began that one of the things I could help her with in exchange for her access to the classroom was student consultations because she often became overwhelmed when she had to advise too many students. I agreed because this gesture helped her while it allowed me to become familiar with the students outside of the classroom, generating increased comfort and honesty in our interactions. She told the students that they should come seek my advice as a graduate student (many of them were interested in pursuing advanced degrees), a researcher (many of them were interested in conducting their own research either for thesis papers or for other future projects), or as a writing teacher due to my position and experience at another local university. Therefore, we tried to establish a friendly rapport from the beginning. We also told the students I would be in the classroom every day, so they could come and "chat" with me at any time. I would also occasionally provide tips about conducting interviews, the practices of service-learning, or writing advice when the occasion and the topic of discussion permitted my involvement. The response was immediately positive as I had several students come and introduce themselves to me after class. Even now, I

continue to exchange email with several of the students despite the completion of the semester because they “just want to stay in touch” (Justin, email).

After the completion of the basic introductions, Paula began what would be the standard pattern for class each day. Once roll was taken and announcements were made, she began lecturing on the subject of the day, which the students kept track of through the class website. Typical lectures were informative, text-based, with plenty of references to required readings that supported basic daily points, and interactive in that she called for student participation often. This kind of teaching method was the predominant model throughout the semester. Before the due date of each assignment, students conducted peer reviews, which allowed them to review, critique, and comment on the work of their peers. Authors could then revise their papers before receiving a grade for their work. Additionally, Paula scheduled three guest speakers who were professional magazine writers to come and talk to the students throughout the semester. The students tended to enjoy these speakers and felt they added “to the stuff we hear all the time from [Paula]” (Adam, interview). The students also had several “work days” that permitted them to work on impending articles instead of coming to class. They were encouraged to seek our advice as needed during these days. For the remainder of the time, the students would read from one of several texts, practice their writing, and come to class to learn about the craft of magazine writing. Topics varied from day to day, but the basic premise rarely did.

### **An Important Note About Service-Learning In the Course**

Of the four main writing assignments for the class, the professor had designed one of them to include a service-learning component. During a pilot study for this project (Deithloff, 2001), she considered the students’ second assignment, the article for the online orientation magazine, to be service-learning because the students in the class were using their expertise to provide a service for incoming students and their parents. However, the results of that study determined that the assignment could not really be classified as service-learning because the students did not have enough

interaction with their “clients” and could not visualize how their efforts constituted as a service. Therefore, Paula altered the fourth assignment, the alumni magazine article, so that it would both provide a service for the university and previous alumni in addition to providing students with an opportunity to interact with those whom they might potentially benefit. The fourth assignment asked students to interview a previous student of the university’s writing program and use this interview to create a profile of the individual to update other alumni on the status of their peers and promote the benefits of the writing program to current and prospective students. Under these stipulations, the students would then be participating in a service-learning project, yet as I will explain, my results again depict some problems with calling this kind of assignment a true service-learning project.

One helpful factor in determining how students felt about the service they were performing as part of their core curriculum was their past experience with service-learning. Of the 25 students, 13 had had no previous experience, 6 had limited exposure (1 or 2 classes), 5 had taken 3 or 4 classes with a service-learning component, and 1 had taken 5 or more such classes. This experience, or lack thereof, allowed the students to reflect on whether or not their actions constituted service. While some students generally felt what they were doing was “mutually beneficial” to them as well as the “clients,” several of the students, especially those with previous service-learning experience, failed to see how their actions qualified as a true service. On Questionnaire 4 (Q4), one student stated, “I really don’t think we did service-learning. I feel like we just learned. I don’t think I did a great good for the community” (Adam). Pam confirmed these remarks by saying, “I don’t think this class really had a service-learning project; it just had projects” (Q4).

What the students described actually having experienced might be more properly called “experiential” in nature. Recall that experiential learning encompasses a broader category that includes service-learning. Students who participate in both a service-learning project and an experiential learning project might claim some of the same benefits: real-world experience, more applied learning, greater understanding of

the class concepts, increased self-confidence, increased leadership skills, enhanced professional development, etc. The main difference between the two pedagogies (as illustrated in this study) is that students who participate in a true service-learning project come away with increased civic responsibility or a sense of contributing to the greater community. Thus, the cited outcomes of this course illustrate that the students cited experiential benefits, whether or not they were able to classify the outcomes as such. For example, one student, Jane, stated that she enjoyed learning in a service-learning environment, but she was actually citing the effects of the broader and more encompassing concept, experiential learning: “Instead of just turning in assignments and learning how the ‘real world’ operates through lecture, as if it were a separate thing, service-learning brings that aspect into the classroom, so we are connected to the field outside the community” (Q4). Although this seems accurate, true service-learning would also give the student a sense of contributing to that same community.

Another student made this distinction a bit clearer: “Honestly...I feel I am the one that received the ‘service.’ I do not have any sense of having contributed to something that required any service from me. I feel I got so much more out of the opportunities than my contribution gave back to anything...I guess because I was getting so much in return it didn’t feel like a service” (Laura, Q4). Certainly, students who give true service might also come to similar conclusions, but it is important for this study that the correct nature of the assignment be identified because of its potential to influence the model that emerged from the results.

### ***Section Summary***

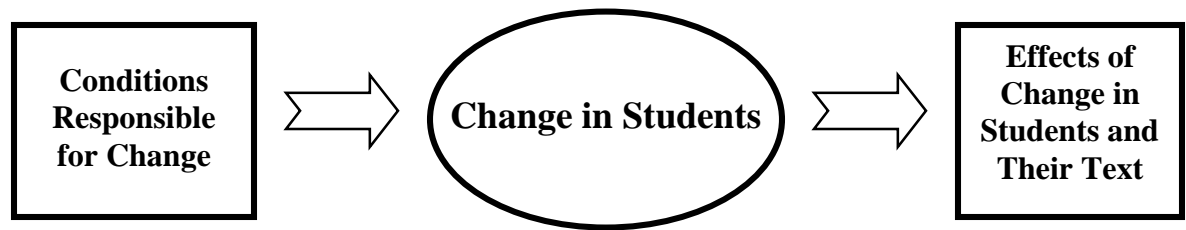
My goal in the discussion up to this point was to offer a glimpse into the classroom setting to establish a sense of the participants in the study and to introduce some of the details (background of the students, the role of service-learning in the course, etc.) that are relevant to the findings. With this introduction to the study’s context, I can turn in the next section to an explanation of the model that was developed to describe the occurrences within this context.

### **An Introduction to the Model**

One goal of every course is to witness improvement in participating students as a result of their experience during the semester. Thus, it is not surprising that the central phenomenon emerging from this study related to student improvement, or more specifically, change in students over the course of a semester. However, what is surprising was how sensitive this change was to the conditions and consequences that help define the process of change, and whether or not it occurred for each student. Even the nature of change a student experienced was dependent on the relationship of the factors within the overarching model. For this reason, the best way to illustrate the results of this study is through a discussion of the central phenomenon, what I am calling “change in students over a semester,” and the model that supports it. Each of these components can then be broken into further, more intricate analyses that will be discussed in full. Finally, I will conclude with a description of how this model applies to certain students in the class.

### **The Central Phenomenon**

Throughout the semester, it was clear that the students, the professor, and I all were concerned with whether or not the students were learning. However, while some of what the students experienced can be considered learning or conceptualizing the core concepts from class, some of their ambitions and realizations for the semester went beyond merely understanding what the professor taught them. For this reason, the focus became whether or not students were changed as a result of being in this class. As the model will illustrate, this “change” and what it means to change, encompasses a hierarchical relationship that helps to explain the nature of change a student experienced. The change students experience in a semester is also dependent on the conditions responsible for producing the change. The change then produces various results both within the student and within the text they produce. Thus, the central phenomenon, the change that occurs in a student during a semester, can be expressed in the following model:



**Figure 4.1: Model of Change in Students During a Semester**

The shape of the pieces within the model has significance because I want to indicate the variability of the particular components. The conditions responsible for change may have a different impact for each student, but despite variable interactions among factors, some form of change is imminent. The nature of change in students that occurs will then influence the effects a student is able to witness either personally or textually, although again not all effects are relevant for all students. This means that both the conditions responsible for change and the effects of change are conditional for each student while it is constant that some form of change will occur for every student.

### ***Section Summary***

As the brief introduction to the model and its central phenomenon would indicate, the linear appearance of this model oversimplifies the interactions among the components. The more accurate complex and intricate system of possibilities and involved factors can best be explained by considering and examining each of the components as mini-models contributing to the greater concept. In this case, one must understand the parts before understanding the whole, and the best place to begin this discussion is at the center of the model, what it means to change.

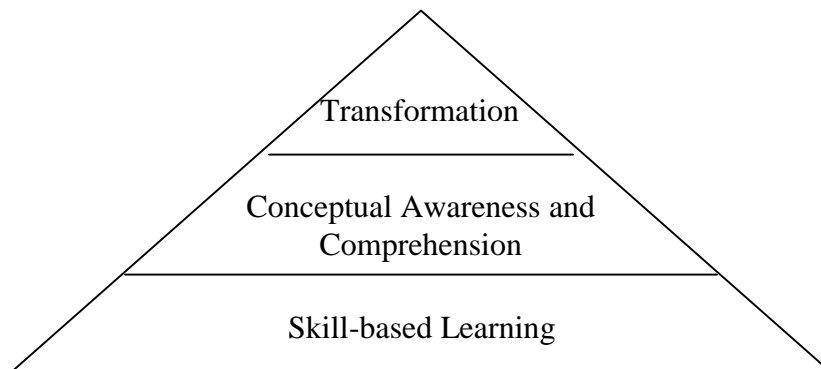
### **Change in Students**

If all goes according to plan during a semester, a student enrolled in a course will experience change of some kind. However, different levels of change are possible. Students can acquire more skills (either general or course-specific), generate a deeper conceptual comprehension, or, in some occasions, alter their perspectives and



misconceptions. One of the goals this study attempted to accomplish was to understand if it is possible for students to be transformed by their participation in a course. Implicit within this quest is a larger question concerning what exactly it means to be transformed, and this raises additional questions. How might a transformed student appear when compared to a peer who might have just “learned something?” Is it enough to learn from a class or should a student expect to be transformed through his or her participation? What should educators realistically expect from their instruction?

A student or the professor’s goals for a semester may not include transformation. In fact, a student may not experience anything resembling transformation and still consider the course a success. However, as one of the focuses of this study, the professor and the students in the magazine writing class had a chance to reflect on what it means to learn during a course and what it means to be transformed as a result of the experience. The results suggest differing degrees of learning or change, the relationship among these degrees, and the desirability of each degree in differing conditions. Again, the results can be visualized through a hierarchy as shown in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2: Classifying Change in Students**

This picture illustrates the progressively more difficult and hierarchically dependent nature of the levels within the figure. The labels for each level represent common terms within the field of education; my goal is to differentiate them more

clearly. As the tiers move from the bottom of the pyramid to the top, the learning becomes more sophisticated yet more challenging to the teacher or learner.

Reciprocally, moving from the top to the bottom shows how the tiers become more attainable and are rooted in the more “basic” kind of learning. Thus, the “upper” levels seem somewhat dependent on the “lower” levels, yet the “lower” levels are more likely and, in some cases, more desirable.

### ***Skill-based Learning***

To elucidate these points more clearly, it is helpful first to establish each tier’s place within the model. For a class like magazine writing, skill-based learning would appear as learning the core concepts unique to magazine writing, such as finding a creative hook, constructing an effective lead, learning to write for a deadline, and other skills that one might encounter while writing magazine articles. For example, the students in this study mentioned several goals for the semester (see Table 4.1). Of these goals, “improve general or course-related writing skills,” “produce marketable writing,” and “improve knowledge of writing or of process” would constitute skill-based goals because they refer, for the most part, to acquiring knowledge or attaining a skill that relates to magazine writing. Of course, there is some fluidity between the levels because one must first understand what makes writing marketable in order to produce marketable writing. But generally speaking, this level is more attainable for students because it does not ask students to make general comparisons or synthesize the information in the way that increased conceptual understanding might. Measurement at this level involves determining whether the student has or has not achieved the skill.

### ***Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension***

As previously alluded to, the next level, Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension, asks students to integrate what they are learning on a theoretical plane and often make comparisons to how these concepts might apply in different situations. This may be the most desired level of learning as it occurs in a typical classroom because it requires students to learn in such a way that they can transfer

what they are learning to different contexts, which is often a course goal. Professors do not want their students learning information in isolation; they want the students to be able to use their knowledge outside and beyond the classroom. Therefore, conceptual understanding is often a measure of whether or not a class is successful: Do students have a deeper understanding of the subject matter and can they show indications of this understanding on their own in other settings?

Examples of this level also appear in the categories that represent the students' goals. Such items as "learn to make writing more engaging/effective/informative," "learn to tailor the product to the audience," "produce well-written works," "learn to write on a variety of levels," or "learn to write more creatively" are conceptual in nature because they require a great understanding of what it means to be creative or engaging before the students can then attempt to model their interpretations. "Learn to tailor the product to the audience" is a pertinent example because in order to accomplish this goal, students must be able to assess who their audience members are and what needs they might have, know how to change writing style in order to accommodate to the audience, understand what effects these changes might have, and produce the desired objective in an effective manner.

To illustrate further the subtle differences between Skill-based Learning and Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension, I will refer to Paula's (the teacher) comments in a preliminary interview concerning her goals for the semester. At the time, she described magazine writing as both "an attainable skill and a genre." Success then would mean that students succeed at the skill-based level once they attain the skill, and at the conceptual awareness and comprehension level once they understand how magazine writing differs from other writing genres. She also indicated what success at these levels might look like. As an attainable skill "students will become familiar with the basics of magazine writing: cover letters, query letters, working with editors...interview and research components of magazine writing." More conceptual achievements would appear as "find or improve upon their [the students'] voice and style, become more attuned to language" or "vary their style

depending on the publication.” One should attain the skills before integrating the concepts, but both quests are desirable.

### **Transformation**

The discussion of this model up to this point has been somewhat complicated due to the interrelatedness of the two bottom tiers. An exploration of the top tier, transformation, becomes even more involved because of the elusive nature of this concept.

Previous researchers have defined transformation as “the development of revised assumptions, premises, ways of interpreting experience, or perspectives on the world by means of critical self-reflection” (Cranton, 1994, p. xii). Eyler and Giles (1999) indicated that when transformation occurs “we struggle to solve a problem where our usual ways of doing or seeing do not work, and we are called to question the validity of what we think we know or critically examine the very premises of our perception of the problem” (p. 133). These definitions are helpful in that they offer a suggestion of what transformation might look like and when it might occur, but they do not make the task of identifying it in the classroom any easier.

For this reason, many of the questions in this study focused on practical issues of transformation: what is it really, what creates the occasion for transformation, is it a desirable goal, etc. The results of this exploration provide some insight into why transformation can be so elusive: it is a theoretical construct, much like creativity, that people feel strongly about but have difficulty conceptualizing. Asking whether or not transformation occurred during the course of a semester required students to engage in very personal reflections that often triggered philosophical debates about what causes change and whether or not they personally were susceptible to the conditions. Still, the study did produce some results that could greatly contribute to a discussion on this topic, however tentative they are.

One of the interesting aspects to come out of this study was a definition of and some defining characteristics for transformation. The students were asked at the

beginning and the end of the course what they thought it meant to be transformed (see Table 4.2 and 4.3). The difference between these two sets of definitions is that students were more detailed in their last response by providing more specific ways in which a person might be transformed. However, more detail tended to mean less agreement on what exactly it meant to be transformed. Most students at the end of class felt that transformation “requires change or growth,” but only 17 students

<b>Table 4.2: Student Definitions of Transformation from the First Questionnaire (n=25)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
A physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual change in ideas/attitude/beliefs/feelings/behavior/“manner of being”	22
Result “improves me as a person;” positive personal improvement	10
Produces new insight/“awareness of difference”/“opens my eyes”	9
Change is “dramatic”, “radical”, or “profound”	5
Change should be permanent	4
Difficult process that requires persistence	4
Change is slow	3
Occurs through experience/observation	3

suggested this aspect of the definition as opposed to the 22 students from the first of the semester who felt transformation was “a physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual change in someone’s ideas, attitude, beliefs, feelings, behavior, or ‘manner of being.’” This indicates that students created more personal definitions of transformation throughout the semester and that they ruminated a bit more on what that definition might be for them. Some of the student comments used to create these categories illustrate this point. On the last questionnaire, one student indicated that transformation was “an ongoing process” (Amata) while another student offered that it “involved reflection” (Jan). These points were relevant to these students, but not to others, indicating the relatively personal nature of the suggested definitions.

<b>Table 4.3: Student Definitions of Transformation from the Fourth Questionnaire (n=20)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Requires change or growth	17
Involves new way of thinking or approaching something	12
Relates to change in self or one's values	8
Way to question beliefs	7
Can involve future actions	3
Change is significant	3
Involves thinking about others	3
No change in definition	3
Result of a learning situation or another's influence	3
Change can be negative	2
Change is often positive	2
Involves spirituality	2

The deeper contemplation in the last questionnaire created an important semantic distinction between the two definitions. At the beginning of the semester, students seemed to feel that transformation was a change. Twenty-two of the 25 students called it “a physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual change.” At the end of the semester, however, most of the students felt that transformation required change but was not necessarily change in and of itself. The final definition shows advanced contemplation about transformation that more closely resembles the theoretical bases of previously established definitions in that it acknowledges a greater complexity than an individual who is simply undergoing a change. This more introspective final focus is the result of a semester's worth of reflection that often asked the students to make personal inferences about more general concepts. Despite the supposed leap in thinking, what is lost in this final definition is any sort of direct identification of what transformation is. The students created a picture of what causes transformation and what the change might look like, but they failed to mention the exact entity involved in the change. This may complicate the students' obvious desire to experience transformation: how can they possibly achieve it if they do not know what it is or do not have the words to express what they are learning?

Although differences among these definitions are apparent, there are some similarities in the students' attempts to conceptualize transformation. The first is that students included some conditions that might be appropriate for causing change on both questionnaires. At the beginning of the semester on Questionnaire 1 (Q1), students indicated that transformation "occurs through experience or observation." On the final questionnaire (Q4), students stated it is the "result of a learning situation or another's influence" and that it "requires change or growth." Students on both questionnaires also described the change they would experience. At first, change was described as a "dramatic," "radical," or "profound" occurrence that "improves me as a person." On the final questionnaire, students described the change as serving more as a catalyst, as "significant," related to "self or one's values," and potentially positive or negative.

A final similarity between these two definitions is the perceived consensus as to the elusive nature of transformation. In both cases, students seemed to have positive feelings towards transformation and saw it as something they would want to achieve. However, the definitions they provided suggest that it was not an everyday occurrence and the initiating impetus had to be fairly particular for the change to occur.

In addition to the definition provided by the students, the professor also offered a definition of transformation. She stated:

Transformation means a change and it is usually some deeper understanding or grasp of whatever the specific skills sets are that the student is working with, whether that's suddenly their sense of voice becomes distinct or their style strengthens in a way that's unique. If a student has been struggling with focus and suddenly seems to get focus and angle. Vocabulary-level increases, fluency ... any of those skills that change. Then there's another transformation that has less to do with skills and more to do with how the student feels, which is increased self-confidence, a sense of getting it. That's the best way I can put it.

In this definition, which is categorized in Table 4.4, Paula confirmed some of the comments made about transformation on the students' final questionnaire, but she also clarified how transformation differs from other forms of learning. She indicated that it both creates a deeper understanding of specific skills, yet it also goes beyond the skill-based or conceptual nature of change into some other realm. She also included the important distinction of heightened conceptual understanding of self, alluding to an increased awareness of others as well. In this manner, she confirmed previous definitions that cite "the development of revised assumptions, premises,

<b>Table 4.4: Suggested Definition of Transformation from Professor</b>
Creates a deeper understanding or grasp of specific skills
Goes beyond a deeper understanding of material
Involves change
Involves more abstract concepts of self, including self-confidence, self-worth, and self-realization

ways of interpreting experience, or perspectives on the world" (Cranton, 1994, p. xii) or that cause transformed students "to question the validity of what we think we know or critically examine the very premises of our perception of the problem" (Eyler & Giles, Jr., 1999, p. 133). After all, one cannot revise one's assumptions or perceptions without first understanding how one thinks or feels. Thus, self-awareness and the many other aspects of self that must be considered seem to be a key component in transformation, especially in terms of how it is different from the previously mentioned levels of change that can occur within students.

Based on what is known about transformation and what has been revealed through the course of this study, I would offer the following definition:

Transformation is the result of a self-reflexive process through which an individual re-conceptualizes his or her emotional, intellectual, behavioral, motivational, and/or spiritual perceptions. The process can either occur suddenly if the self-reflection produces an epiphany, or



gradually as with a deeper awakening that occurs over time. To be transformed means to experience an increased or new awareness about a global or more personal matter, whether the subject of the realization is a person, an issue, a theory, etc.

Just as learning can encompass realms beyond the cognitive, transformation seems often to intersect more than simply conceptual content, in that a person's attitude, behavior, thoughts, feelings, incentives, and beliefs may also be altered by the change.

As has been previously mentioned, the profound impact of these re-conceptualizations suggests that transformation does not occur as often as the other possible changes that can occur in students, but it is obvious when it does. As compared to the Skill-based Learning and Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension levels represented in Figure 4.2, transformation involves more than asking whether or not a student can perform a certain task or grasp a certain kind of reasoning. In terms of magazine writing, it goes beyond the question of can a student produce a successful article, to a question of whether a student has a deeper awareness of the kind of language, skills, and techniques it takes to construct an effective article. In terms of service-learning within the context of this particular magazine writing course, transformation means a greater awareness of audience, the needs of the audience, and how to tailor an article to meet those needs. Transformation is a *way* in which the students produce text rather than focusing on the actual text they produce (although the text can give clues about whether or not a student has been transformed). Transformation is a much more comprehensive recognition of what occurs in the practice of writing and includes a change in what students choose to pursue, the information they include, the structure inherent within their papers, etc.

Again, transformation occurs infrequently, but it is powerful when it does happen, which is why it receives so much attention in this study. Finding the conditions that would support transformation in each classroom would mean high-level changes in

student learning, if the course-objectives or the professor's goals for student learning permit.

Additional ways in which one might differentiate between this level and the previous two in classifying change in students, come from the professor and the students, all of whom discussed how transformation differed from a deeper understanding of the material or the acquisition of a new skill. To reiterate an earlier point, Paula felt the distinction "has to do with those more abstract concepts of self. So self-confidence, self-worth, a sense on the part of the student that, 'I'm getting this.' And a deeper understanding, but those more abstract, harder to pin down concepts that come from sense of self" (interview). This explanation shows how each level builds on the previous because transformation would include the effects of the previous level. Thus, whatever they accomplish as a result of Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension would be multiplied with the benefits of the more difficult task of achieving realization of the "big picture" and one's place within it. So what Paula considered a developed understanding of self translates here into re-conceptualizing aspects of the self, including certain motivational, affective, cognitive, behavioral, spiritual, etc. components that compose the makings of an individual or his/her belief system.

The students' feelings about whether or not one could distinguish between being transformed and simply improving, however, was not as clear. They seemed divided between two sides of what could potentially be a philosophical debate. On the one hand, students felt there were strong similarities between improving and being transformed (see Table 4.5, Part I). In general, students in this group tended to feel that the two learning outcomes "can be synonymous, but aren't always" (Q4). These students seemed to feel that being transformed means to improve, but were unclear as to whether improvement always meant transformation. The students struggled with this issue by acknowledging that "writing is a mode of learning and learning is incorporated" (Pablo, Q4), thereby implying the two must be synonymous. But again, what this seems to justify is the inclusion of the learning acquired within the

preceding level of conceptual awareness, but not the reciprocal acquisition of all that is involved in being transformed. The second and larger group of students felt that there were substantial differences between improving one's writing and being transformed (see Table 4.5, Part II). Some students indicated that transformation "was more sensitive than improvement" (Amata, Q4) and that "it produces something new" (Jane, Q4). Others were more descriptive in their feelings by suggesting that transformation "cannot be taught" (Pam, Q4) or that it "shows the influence of others" (Maria, Q4). Nevertheless, students on this side of the issue tried to explain differences as something larger than improving. To them, transformation involved more global considerations, whether or not that included more personal aspects or

<b>Table 4.5: The Perceived Relationship Between Writing Improvements and Transformation (N=20)</b>	
<b>Part I: The Two Terms Are More Similar Than Different (n=6)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements*</u></b>
Synonymous	5
Improving means changing something from the past on a small or large scale in order to move forward	4
Writing can reflect a transformation	3
<b>Part II: The Two Terms Are Different (n=14)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Transformation involves mental states, beliefs, or methods; "comes from within"	4
Transformation is less about technical aspects and more about the bigger picture of writing	4
Transformation encompasses more than writing by including personal life changes	3
Transformation requires a greater amount of change	2
* Three students who belong to the second group discussed how the terms could be both similar and different; but in the end, they seemed to agree more with the differences group. Where they saw similarities, their endorsements were added into the numbers of Part I.	

more holistic aspects. For them, being transformed meant to experience improvement in addition to another, more personally beneficial component.

Despite the differences in these two opinions, the general consensus confirms the distinction between Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension and Transformation because one level does incorporate aspects of the other even though the reverse is not necessarily true. However, the differences in student opinions also attest to another consideration that will play a larger factor in a discussion of another aspect of the model: Conditions Responsible for Change. Inherent within this model is the importance of motivational components in determining a student's willingness to participate in or experience change. So it is interesting to see how students felt about the difference between these two levels because their feelings could impact their ability to be transformed. How they feel about their ability to be transformed certainly ties into whether or not they are able to experience a transformation.

### ***Justification for the Model***

When considering all of the learning outcomes or elements of change in students that could appear during a semester, one could question why Skill-based Learning, Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension, and Transformation compose what I mean by Change in Students in the model. My rationale depends on two main reasons.

First and foremost, these three types of change continued to surface throughout the semester, both in terms of what the students felt they had experienced and what the professor felt the students learned. For example, after writing the first article, students mentioned in their second journal entry (J2) the kinds of issues they faced while writing the article and what they felt they learned as a result of the process. These results fell at each of the levels of the pyramid of change figure. One student, Rosa, identified that she would have to work on the acquired skill of organization in order to ease the process of writing future magazine articles.

Typically I can put out 500 words in a few minutes, but this was not the case here. I had trouble organizing my ideas. I knew what I wanted to say but it was difficult to say all of that and keep the ongoing theme consistent. Add to that a stint of unexplainably bad writing that has been plaguing me for the last few months and you have a very long time trying to shape this article into something presentable (J2).

This represents Skill-based Learning because Rosa's admitted difficulty with this assignment came from an inability to express her thoughts in a consistent and organized manner. Thus, the issue at hand is the acquisition (or lack thereof) of a skill that can be attained with practice and exposure to other similar tasks.

Jan, one of the two MLA students, identified a more conceptually based learning outcome. She mentioned how, for her, writing for magazines resembles photography. "In photography one always hears that 'a picture is worth a thousand words.' Well, in writing the [first assignment] I discovered that a concise, superbly written piece is worth one of those rare and telling photographs. It requires good focus and subject matter, a proper sense of timing, and a bit of artistic luck" (J2). This example illustrates the Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension level because, not only did she make a comparison to her previous experiences, she exhibited an awareness of the kind of features she felt would create a successful magazine article. This is a growth in understanding.

The Transformative level is more difficult to identify in students' perceptions because it closely resembles the Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension level. The difference between the two levels is that Transformation includes the heightened conceptual understanding in addition to another, more reflexive and harder to grasp component that occurs on a more global plane. Pablo gives us an example of this kind of learning when he talks about the fluid nature of writing for magazines and how one must adjust to the fluidity. "Things aren't always set in stone and you must go with your instinct. Also, magazine writing is an entirely different animal. I'm used to academic writing, it comes easily for me, but trying to write about personal experiences and insert it into a small amount of space while still maintaining your

voice and style. Now that’s difficult” (J2). With this statement, Pablo mentioned Skill-based Learning (conforming to space restrictions, how to include personal experiences) and Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension (comparisons to academic writing, how to adapt) in addition to Transformation (being able to achieve the other learning outcomes while accomplishing the more difficult task of “maintaining your voice and style”). The statement shows an advanced way of perceiving of integrating the problem of learning to write for magazine articles.

As previously mentioned, these kinds of examples occur throughout the students’ journal entries and their responses to questionnaires. Each example confirms the basis for the levels represented in the Classifying Change in Students model. Elements of all three levels can be seen in examples such as Table 4.6, depicting the descriptive coding categories for the students’ responses to the sixth journal entry (J6) prompt:

<b>Table 4.6: What Students Learned About Their Writing (n=17)</b>	
<b><u>Categories</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Different techniques ( <i>Skill-Based</i> )	<b>9</b>
How to create suspense ( <i>Skill-Based</i> )	3
Ordinary events can be presented creatively ( <i>Conceptual</i> )	3
Personal stories can be universal ( <i>Conceptual</i> )	3
The importance of honesty and passion in writing ( <i>Conceptual/Transformation</i> )*	2
The importance of voice and language ( <i>Conceptual/Transformation</i> )*	2
The importance of who you quote/the research you include ( <i>Conceptual</i> )	2
<p>* Could be either level depending on whether a student simply recognized the importance (Conceptual) or learned how to write in order to accommodate this importance (Transformation). For example, Pedro referenced the Conceptual level by stating, “The narrator is honest and brave using this situation to explore the mixed feelings about his teacher...It gave me an idea of the gray area between good and evil,” which shows a new awareness of the effects of honesty. Jan referenced the Transformative level by stating, “I also learned that almost anything can be interesting when the right voice is used and the right prose chosen. [The author] takes what could have been a boring story about an ecological disaster and turns it into an outdoor adventure. It’s all in the style, the humor, the honesty and the passion.” She not only recognizes the important of honesty and passion, but she makes helpful generalizations that can apply to her own writing.</p>	

“Select one article we’ve read thus far from *Best American Magazine Writing* and analyze it in terms of what you like, what you learned about writing (style, interviews, research, leads/conclusions, quotes, etc.), what makes it a good article, what you might apply to your own writing.”

Further justification is evident in the professor’s views of what she felt the students accomplished during the semester. In her final interview, she discussed the changes a student could undergo during the semester.

I think that at the beginning of class either you had students who felt they knew a lot and were going to do okay because they are always good students, or you had students who had no idea what magazine writing is, and then I think there was a midway point where all of them realized how little they knew about anything. Now, I would say the majority of them would be able to say, “I can write a magazine article. I understand what goes into writing a magazine article. I better understand what goes into writing a profile.” It doesn’t mean that they wouldn’t be nervous or anxious, but I think there is a confidence. I think that is a real key piece. I think there is a confidence. I think there is a, if not mastery of skills, there is a...they have acquired some skills and understand some techniques that go into this form of writing... I can’t see how that if that is happening they are not learning about themselves and I think that is really important, that they learn something about themselves, whatever it is.

Therefore, this final example illustrates the importance of learning at all three levels and how the learning at each level builds on itself. One must achieve the skills (Skill-based Learning) in order to experience mastery of understanding how to write for the genre of magazine writing (Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension). If this can be achieved, then students can realize a deeper, more profound consciousness concerning how their learning fits into a greater context or about themselves (Transformation).

The second and final reason these three terms make up the basis for the Classifying Change in Students figure is because they represent common goals for both professors and students during a semester. It is realistic to assume that students

and professors alike would desire the kind of learning that would result from these changes. Therefore, the terms appear in the figure because they are justified by the data and applicable to the typical classroom.

### ***Section Summary***

The preceding discussion described what is meant by *change in students* according to the *classifying change in students* sub-model upon which it is based. This hierarchical representation of the levels of change a student can experience consists of three main levels: *Skill-based Learning*, improvements involving procedural knowledge or the development of skills, *Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension*, knowledge about the genre of magazine writing and an understanding of how the skills are used within the field, and *Transformation*, a global understanding of the concepts as they apply to the more general field of writing. Relationships among the sub-model's tiers were also established along with a definition for transformation. Now, I will illustrate how these changes impact the students who experience them.

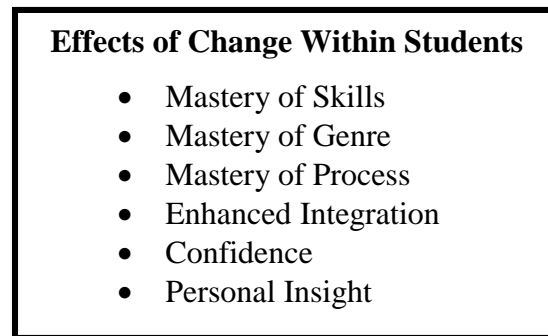
### **Effects of Change in Students and Their Text**

The next logical concern is what might these changes look like in a practical setting like the classroom. Throughout the data collection process, it became clear that students and their professor tended to focus on several considerations when determining whether or not learning had occurred during the semester. Because these considerations determined how students themselves measured success in the class and how the professor evaluated their essays to determine overall performance in the class, these considerations become the effects of change in this study. The effects, which are common to many classrooms, can be broken into two separate entities: effects as they occur within students and effects as they occur within the students' text. Each of these entities will be discussed in turn.



### ***The Effects of Change Within Students***

The variables that make up this part of the model were derived from reports by the students during journal entries, questionnaires, and interviews, from observations reported by the professor (during interviews), and from my own observations. Each variable (see Figure 4.3) was either named explicitly or alluded to by the participants and thus represents perceptions of change rather than a direct assessment of change. In some cases, the variables correspond with a certain level of change discussed earlier. In other cases, the variables can occur across levels. A discussion of each variable will illustrate this point.



**Figure 4.3: The Effects of Change that Occur Within Students**

*Mastery of skills.* This variable relates to the first level of change students can experience. Because it pertains to task-specific improvements it is often the focus of classroom discussions. The course under observation was no exception. The professor and the students spent much of their time on the development of skills, so how well a student mastered them became a justifiably important consideration. In fact, this variable and the next (mastery of genre) were typically used to determine whether or not students were “successful” in the class, as measured by the students’ articles. For this reason, the professor and the students spent much of their attention on the mastery of a certain set of skills.

In discussing the acquisition of skills, students tended to reference certain aspects of the assignment or how they approached the production of text for the assignment. For example, when reflecting on the semester during an interview, students often reported: “I learned how to shape an article” (Gabrielle), “I am still struggling with how to develop an angle” (Dolores), “I am learning to write shorter articles” (Stacy), or “I know now what I need to do” (Jane). These comments appear almost as a checklist of aspects that must be considered or included within the text. Students seemed not as concerned with how this must be accomplished (process), but rather with whether or not they were able to accomplish these goals.

Thus, references to certain specifications of the assignments, such as word limit, hook, and identification with the audience, were prevalent within some students’ revelations: “I found it hard to write, to pack in everything, all the information, into a short amount of space and make it interesting. I feel like there were certain things I had to include and that ate up a lot of my words” (Amata). Rob explained that he struggled with several of the articles because of their specified guidelines: “It was hard to make it interesting, to be descriptive...It was hard to be concise and it seems like they [the articles] had to be perfect.” Pedro suggested an additional difficulty when he admitted that he struggled “to make someone seem real on paper.” Certain aspects of these comments resemble what writers must face in order to master the genre of magazine writing, but here the comments represent skill-based goals because the students must face how to produce the specifications of the articles that define the genre.

In another example, Andres admitted that one of his main focuses when writing the assignments was making “those I am writing [to] see what I saw.” Again, writing for an audience is a consideration that relates to several variables, but this particular reference pertains to mastery of skill because it appears as a goal he must strive to accomplish for the article in question. For other variables, audience represents a concept that students must try to understand and governs how they will write. Once

this conceptualization occurs then students can attempt to master the practice of writing for the audience, as this student mentions.

*Mastery of genre.* Like mastery of skills, the variable mastery of genre pertains to what students must consider when they are learning how magazine writing differs from other styles of writing they may have encountered. During the semester, classroom time was often devoted to understanding what writers in this field must consider when they prepare to write an article. These considerations often differ from journalists, newspaper reporters, and those who write for academia. Classroom discussion indicated that magazine writers must understand that their audience may not read an article unless they are “hooked” by the first paragraph. Readers expect vivid descriptions, active phrasing, shorter paragraphs...the list continues.

One of Paula’s comments during an interview helps explain the conceptualization of genre: “[By the end of the semester], I would say the majority of them [the students] would be able to say, ‘I can write a magazine article. I understand what goes into writing a magazine article. I better understand what goes into writing a profile.’ ...I think there is a, if not mastery of skills, there is a...they have acquired some skills and understand some techniques that go into this form of writing.”

Despite the allusion to skills, mastery of genre goes beyond skill acquisition. The focus within this variable is conceptualizing how to use skills and techniques to effectively write for magazines. Additionally, students need to comprehend what it means to write for magazines as opposed to any other writing styles. Therefore, this variable corresponds with the second level of change, Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension. Participants measured “success” for this variable by determining if students met the standards of the field and whether or not they were able to mimic the writing style. Comments pertaining to this variable reflect an understanding of the expectations placed upon the students as magazine writers. For example, Pablo identified what he believed to be his intentions as a writer: “I think the specific purpose for them [the articles] is to direct some information to an audience specifically to teach them something or make them see something—a new

perspective.” His words demonstrate that he is learning what magazine readers expect, an important concept both within the class and within the field.

Other students also made statements concerning what they learned about the genre of magazine writing. Dolores claimed that she really learned about “marketing writing” during the semester because “you can’t say negative things about the topic.” Tiffany described her learning as the process of understanding “the different stories that can be written.” Juan felt he was learning “real world things like what editors want and don’t want.” He went on to add: “I have to be a lot less wordy and write for an audience. I have to cater to people even if I don’t know much about them.” In more general terms, Adam and Amata felt they learned creativity because of the flexible approach magazine writing affords the writer.

In some cases, the reports of student learning came as a comparison to other genres. In one example, Pedro learned about the importance of identifying the readership of the magazine and the intent of the particular piece by reflecting on the differences between class assignments: “I approach all of the pieces differently because they involve different levels of time and organization. With [articles that incorporate] interviews, you can’t just sit down and write. You have to go get the story.” Maria agreed more generally by explaining: “Each article has a different purpose and audience you must tailor to.”

Juanita discussed general differences between writing for magazines and writing for academia. In magazine writing “there is more focus on the audience and who you are submitting the article to.” Rob added that he learned “audience is the most important factor and so is the magazine as opposed to your personal interests.” Jan felt the differences occurred because “in magazine writing, you get to inject your personality and you don’t have to strive for objectivity and scholarship.” These students recognized how the expressed differences would affect how they must approach the tasks as writers.

Some students made direct comparisons to magazine writing and newspaper reporting. Gabrielle stated, “Magazine writing is like writing for newspapers in that it

is more for entertainment, often includes profiles of people and is on a deadline.”

Rosa agreed with the similarity by adding that, when writing in both genres, “you still have to catch your audience in the beginning and write to them.” However, Mora disagreed with the stated similarities by claiming that magazine writing was not “as plain and succinct.”

In all, these reported descriptions of learning indicate that students developed a greater understanding in the field of interest. Because the reports are more conceptually based, it might be difficult to see how they represent actual learning. However, the learning pertaining to this variable represents a higher-order change within students because they are able to recognize the style of magazine writing and when the style should be applied. Writers would not need a set of skills if they did not also develop the tools for knowing when to use those skills. Thus, one can comprehend why so much classroom attention is typically devoted to the development of this variable, in addition to the mastery of skills.

*Mastery of process.* As with the two previous variables, mastery of process is also an important focus during writing classes because it pertains to how students personally approach the task of writing. It shares a relationship with skills and genre because after writers develop the skills they will apply to the genre of magazine writing, they must develop the ability to put the learning into practice. Similarities end here, however. Although the variable may pertain somewhat to the theorized levels of change in students, it does not directly apply because it straddles Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension and Transformation. It more closely resembles Transformation because a developed understanding of one’s style will have global implications for the writer’s practices, but the developments may not always be as complex or broadly-focused as a transformative change might be. Students may learn about producing a particular assignment, and the learning might not transfer outside of the genre or even the assignment guidelines.

Another difference between this and the previous variables is the fact that process is more difficult to teach because it is more individually based than the other

variables. Professors may devote class time to a discussion on how students might alter their process, but it is up to the students to use, apply, and practice this information. Because process is a means to achieving an end, it usually does not receive as much direct attention during classroom discussions, which often focus on how to develop the skill- and genre-based end. Therefore, references to process tend to occur less frequently. Students certainly consider process when producing any type of writing, but whether or not they recognize the role of process or acknowledge changes that may occur as a result of contemplating that role is up to the individual.

Despite this caveat, students in the study did discuss their writing process during interviews. Stacy called her process the task of thinking “how it will go and how it will come out.” She, and others, felt her process did not change despite exposure to a new form of writing. Maria expressed this belief: “I wrote the way I always write.” Rob questioned the sensibility of adhering to old writing practices when his grades did not produce more desirable effects: “I approached each article the same way, but maybe that was the problem. Maybe I shouldn’t have.”

Other students did attempt to adjust their process to accommodate a new style. Some were quite specific on the means they took to change their process. Amata said that she had to make changes because “when I read my work, it sounded silly to me. I was not used to it.” Therefore, she decided to change how she approached the articles: “I started making a list of all the things I wanted to include and then I freewrote first.” Adam decided to experiment with some new practices before he approached a type of article that was unfamiliar to him: “I had to write with a creative flow and I don’t do that very much...I experimented by brainstorming for an hour and a half first instead of just sitting down to write. I don’t revise often so I liked the prewriting exercise.” Andres also made changes, but he found the endeavor difficult: “I had to short [sic] up my writing...it hurts to take out your best work, but it makes it sound smooth. It makes it sound better and less cheesy.”

Not all students struggled with the changes they had to make during the semester. Rosa said that she found the process of writing to be “an interesting learning

experience.” She enjoyed finding a way to write the assignments: “Each is different from the other and has a different purpose, but you still have to catch the audience in the beginning and write to them.” Mora agreed with Rosa’s sentiments. She claimed, “Writing is coming easier for me.” She felt that because she now had the “basics down,” she could turn her attention to what must be done for each specific assignment: “I like to think about how my style should be, who my audience is, and how the lead should go.” These thoughts helped her produce each article to her satisfaction.

Through his reflection, Justin was able to recognize that his writing “flows if I can identify what’s going on with the piece.” He went on in more detail about the process he prefers: “I tend to think about the assignment for a week before I write about it. My ideas incubate. I sit awhile, store it, write a rough draft, and get feedback from a friend before turning it in. I need time to edit.” He felt this structured plan worked for him, and so he continued to put it into practice.

Each one of these students discussed in detail the measures they took when approaching the task of writing. For some, the process was very deliberate. Others seemed to take a more haphazard, less structured approach. Despite stylistic differences, the need to talk about their preferences demonstrates the importance of the variable mastery of process for writing majors. Perhaps this variable appears in the model because these students are becoming experts in their field, and they think about their craft more than non-majors might. At any rate, this variable represents an important change for the students who did experience it. This change might even be more profound than others (the changes that are more transformative in nature) because students were able to learn something about themselves that they can carry on to other writing situations. Any revelations that make writing easier would certainly be valuable and therefore memorable.

*Enhanced integration.* This variable directly applies to the Transformative level in the Change in Students model because it deals with global application and heightened conceptual realizations. As a variable of the possible effects a student may

experience, however, it is labeled integration to reflect the language used by the professor. During her interviews, Paula often stated that a student would know he or she had experienced transformation because there would be a clear display of “integrated learning.” Furthermore, students tended not to mention the more globally-applied but personally-based realizations unless the results “enhanced” their way of viewing their writing. For these reasons, student references to changes in student writing perspectives are labeled enhanced integration.

For many students, references to this variable appear as epiphanies. There is a sense that students finally realized something they had been struggling with or some piece of knowledge professors expected them to know. Gabrielle, for instance, stated, “There’s a difference between writing for the readers of [the magazine in the third assignment] and how I can show [Paula] that I am writing for the readers of [the magazine].” To her, learning meant recognizing a distinction between performing in the “real world” versus proving from within the classroom that one is able to perform in a more applied context. Maria’s “ah-ha moment” came as a more general realization about what her goal as a magazine writer should be: “You have to make your stuff come alive.” Andres shared a similar realization: “I know now how to say so much with few words and make it interesting.” These students made important discoveries about what would make them more effective writers both generally and specifically within the genre. The realizations differ from comments within the *mastery of genre* variable because of these more conceptual and transferable insights.

Another student, Tiffany, felt that she did not learn as much about how to write because she was familiar with journalism, but she did learn some important lessons about her style, or “how to say it as it is.” She elaborated this point: “I learned how to explain the food as a journalist rather than as a reporter.” When asked how a journalist writes about food, she said that the writing was “tighter, more vivid, where you could actually see the food. It [the writing] was just better.” She also gained some important insight into her process. To her, writing for each article was “different but not distinctly. But there is much more focus on the audience and who you’re



submitting the article to. I never thought about that before. You figure out who you're writing for and figure out what that's about—really focusing on the audience.” This comment sounds similar to those expressed in the mastery of process variable, but it ends with an important realization about the importance of audience in general. Again, the broader understanding and admitted “ah-ha moment” distinguish this variable from the others.

Several students' realizations came in response to personal struggles with the assignments. When approaching the articles, Jane questioned, “Where do I put myself in these?” Mora also raised the same concern: “It is easier to write about others than it is to write about myself. It is hard to put me in there.” Laura said she was uncomfortable with the “openness” of the assignments, but she also felt that “maybe that was on purpose” in order to make the students stretch beyond their comfort zone. These statements indicate that the writers were wrestling with the degree of appropriateness for the inclusion of voice within the text.

Jane went on to highlight another common concern for writers when she stated that she had to “write hard to read easy.” Here she contemplated what exactly makes enjoyable reading for the audience. These and other considerations mark important questions that writers must ask as they contemplate what it means to write for audience. The comments indicate that students are truly processing the concept of writing for an audience, possibly in ways they had not previously considered. The results of these questions will prove to be valuable for the students beyond the scope of this classroom. The fact that the students were now considering these questions despite the fact that they were juniors or seniors with extensive writing experience also makes interesting implications about the difference between understanding a concept (Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension) and understanding the causes, consequences, and applications of the concept (Transformation). Even describing the distinction between these concepts is difficult because the language is similar. But the difference in student learning can be profound for both the student and his or her writing.

*Confidence.* The term confidence can seem vague as it can be used differently in different contexts. For this variable, the term most closely resembles the concept of self-efficacy in that what is impacted is the students' beliefs in their writing abilities. Because the variable describes the students' beliefs about their skills, their knowledge, their process, or their general capabilities to perform, it does not relate to any one level on the Change in Students hierarchy. The variable is also unique in that references to confidence generally occur in the context of other variables (i.e., "I do not believe I will perform well on this assignment", or "I can't write introductions"). However, the variable remains its own category because the students are not reporting that they learned a particular skill or process. The students are stating that their belief in themselves about those skills, processes, etc. changed. Thus, confidence represents any change in a student's perceptions of their writing.

Some students, such as Maria, Gabrielle, Adam, and Tiffany expressed a general confidence in their abilities that was confirmed by their participation in the course. Pam put their feelings into words: "I am a student of writing so I am used to writing and am comfortable with the writing process." Other students developed this confidence as the course went along. When reflecting on the semester, Stacy was happy with her new accomplishments as a magazine writer: "I can do it. You know these are skills you have to have, so it's good." Juanita also expressed her newfound confidence: "I'm comfortable with this kind of writing, but I'm a different writer than I was when I first did this."

Dolores felt that the class represented a step in her development but that she still had more to learn before she would actively pursue her aspirations: "The class helped prepare me to start small, but I still wouldn't know how to approach the bigger magazines." Jane shared these feelings: "I now know about the tone, style, things about the field in general, and how to approach this [writing for magazines], but I am not going to run out there and do it just yet." However, some students like Pablo gained the confidence to pursue their ambitions: "I think that I now have more confidence in pursuing a freelance writing job. I, like many other aspiring writers,

would love to have this job as a full-time job, but we must be realistic. Still that does not stop me from trying my best to land a good writing job.”

Despite these achievements, some students never gained confidence during the semester. Laura was an interesting student because she struggled with her confidence throughout the semester. Despite success in the class and in the “real world” when a magazine chose to publish one of her articles, she never really felt comfortable with her abilities: “This kind of writing has been difficult for me because the style is unfamiliar. I have to have familiarity and structure or I feel uncertain about my writing...everything is a struggle because it’s a new way of writing. I enjoy it, but I’m in a transition.” Juan also had serious doubts about his ability, although his pertained to only one assignment. He stated, “I am afraid that what I write won’t be good enough.” His solution was just not to turn in the assignment because “it wouldn’t improve my ability.”

Some students like Justin never knew exactly how they felt. He stated, “I haven’t come to terms with myself as a writer. I still consider myself a student. It’s too bold right now. Am I assuming I’m a writer?” The process of writing made him nervous because “I feel like I will be judged.”

In more general terms, students responded in Questionnaire 4 to questions on how they felt about their writing ability at the end of the semester. The results, presented in Table 4.7, reflect the belief that a majority of the students felt and expressed more confidence in their writing than they did at the beginning of the semester. Even those who said they still needed to improve listed some of their accomplishments, indicating favorable feelings towards certain aspects of their writing.

Thus, these student examples illustrate the importance of confidence within a student’s development. In some cases, students felt that they did not change much because they perceived themselves as good writers already. In other cases, students could have experienced change without knowing it because they lacked confidence in their abilities. In either instance, it is clear that the way students feel could impact their ability to realize when change is occurring, so it is important to acknowledge

confidence as both a predictor for change (to be discussed later) and as an indication of whether or not change has occurred.

<b>Table 4.7: Student Perceptions of Their Writing Ability (N=20)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Confident/good	12
Improved	6
Can be published or write magazines as a career	4
Good at expressing my intentions/reaching an audience	4
Lack interest/magazine writing isn't for me	3
Still need more work	3
Greater insight/interest	2
<b>GREATER SKILLS/I KNOW WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT</b>	2
No change	2

*Personal insight.* The comments that pertain to this variable deal with changes in students' interests or writing preferences and do not correspond easily with the levels of Change in Students hierarchy. They relate more to realizations that will impact the students' personal lives beyond the classroom. For this reason, personal insight and the comments that prove its legitimacy as a variable are fairly straightforward.

Generally, the comments from student interviews tend to fall into two camps: those who want to continue in the field of magazine writing and those who are no longer interested. On the side still committed to the pursuit of magazine writing, students tended to relay comments like Pablo's previously cited quote: "I would love to have this job as a full-time job." Mora, Laura, Amata, and Adam also mentioned that they would like to pursue a career in the field.

Those who decided not to pursue their previous interests tended to be more vocal about their disillusionment with the field. For example, Stacy said, "I originally wanted to write for magazines, but the class has taught me it is tougher than I thought. With the money and stuff, it's hard to be successful. It is very informative if you want to do this as a profession, but I don't think I want to anymore." Pam added, "I thought I would like writing for magazines and I don't. There is too much competition, too

little security, and too many deadlines.” Juanita was not as confident in her dislike, but she still elected not to pursue the field further. “I like it, but I have to have time and I don’t see myself having that. I don’t want to just put anything together.” Rob and Pedro also expressed the desire to pursue other forms of writing.

On the third questionnaire, students responded to the question, “I will continue to pursue magazine writing after this class.” Their answers, which can be seen in Table 4.8, offer a slightly different picture than that presented in the interviews. Here, 50% of the students are undecided about their interest in the field. Of course, this questionnaire did come earlier in the semester than the interviews, leaving those on the fence so to speak an opportunity to decide. Yet, the responses still indicate a polarity among those students who had reached a decision (5 rate their responses as 4 or 5 indicating a desire to continue writing for magazines and 6 rate their responses as a 1 or 2 indicating little desired to pursue the field). While the beliefs could be a result

<b>Table 4.8: Student Interest in Magazine Writing After Completion of the Course (N=22)</b>					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	3	3	11	2	3

of how the students felt about the class in general, the responses indicate that many of the students had been able to make personal choices about the changes they had experienced, even if the results meant more time processing how they felt.

*The variables at a glance.* As is evident from the preceding discussion, the six variables that represent the effects of change within students rarely existed in isolation from each other. Most variables tended to impact each other (confidence, mastery of process, enhanced integration, etc.), serve as precursors for each other (mastery of skills and mastery of genre), or enable the development of each other (mastery of genre and personal insight). For this reason, it is often helpful to observe how they might appear on a general list of learning outcomes from student journal responses. These lists were developed at the completion of the third (Table 4.9—from

<b>Table 4.9: Student Descriptions of Their Learning from the Third Assignment (N=19)</b>	
<b><u>Categories</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
The importance of writing for an audience (1, 2)	9
How to write for a deadline (1)	5
I enjoy this type of work (6)	5
Realized difference between magazine writing and other genres (2)	5
Sharpened my senses as a writer (4)	4
Experimented with different process (3)	3
I learned about the kind of writing that makes up this field (2)	3
I learned about the logistics of working in this field (2)	3
I need to put aside my preferences (4)	3
The importance of clarity (2, 4)	3
The importance of detail/description (2, 4)	3
The topic/perspective are important/"I need to be interested" (6)	3
Difficult to synthesize information or make it flow (1, 4)	2
I can always learn something (5)	2
I can do this (5)	2
I don't like this type of work (6)	2
The importance of angle (2, 4)	2
Must not offend readers (2,4)	2
To be persistent (2)	2
Writing helps me deal with life (6)	2

Journal Entry 8) and fourth assignments (Table 4.10—from Journal Entry 9). The numbers by the labeled categories represent the 6 different variables (1=mastery of skills, 2=mastery of genre, 3=mastery of process, 4=enhanced integration, 5=confidence, and 6=personal insight).

Some of the categories presented in the tables represent very detailed responses. It was important to maintain these details because they more accurately depict the students' voices in this manner and because they illustrate the depth of student reflection. These two tables were selected because the assignment-specific examples provide nice illustrations of the kind of comments students made to represent their

<b>Table 4.10: Student Descriptions of Their Learning from the Fourth Assignment (N=19)</b>		
<b><u>Categories</u></b>		<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
How to make the person come alive on the page (1, 2, 4)	<b>15</b>	
Improved interviewing skills (1)		13
Interviewing can be fun (6)		9
How to decide what to include and making it cohesive (1, 2)		8
Phone or email interviews are challenging (1)		8
Follow-up questions are important (1, 4)		6
Profiles are about emphasizing the person being interviewed (2)		6
Insight into the kind of questions that need to be asked (4)		5
How to conduct email interviews (1)		4
How to get to know the person in a way that you can accurately write about them (1)		4
Interviewing is a relationship (4)		4
The importance of finding the right angle (1, 2)		4
The importance of getting enough information (1)		4
The importance of being natural as an interviewer (1, 2, 4)		3
This assignment was easy for me (6)		3
Good writing takes time (4)		2
I learned about myself or my interests (6)		2
Insight into when to quote and when not to (2, 4)		2
It is difficult to coordinate time schedules (1)		2
It is difficult to make the piece interesting (4)		2
Remembering to write in the interviewee's voice (4)		2
The importance of being descriptive enough (2, 4)		2
The importance of the beginning of the Article (4)		2

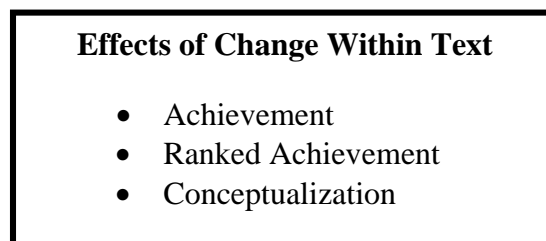
learning. Additionally, the tables reflect the students' sentiments towards the last two assignments, thereby encompassing the cumulative changes in experiences throughout the semester. Together, the tables further prove the validity of the six variables because all are represented and accounted for.

### ***Section Summary***

As the first of two potential effects of change students can encounter during a semester, the *effects of change within students* can produce changes in *mastery of skills* (ability to perform basic skills associated with the course), *mastery of genre* (increased awareness of concepts associated with the genre of writing), *mastery of process* (improved understanding of the writing process), *enhanced integration* (heightened critical consciousness about self, writing, or others), *confidence* (greater belief in one's ability to write), and *personal insight* (intimate realizations about one's aspirations, preferences, and abilities). I will now describe the second potential effect students can experience, *effects of change within student texts*.

### ***The Effects of Change Within the Text***

The variables in this section (see Figure 4.4), which came mainly from professor interviews, observation, and the students' articles, represent the kind of change a student could exhibit as they progressed from one assignment or article to the next. In many cases, the variables epitomize improvements in the student's writing, but this was not always the case. These variables also correspond with one or more levels of change as represented by Figure 4.2. A discussion of each variable will further illustrate these and other points.



**Figure 4.4: The Effects of Change that Occur Within the Students' Text**

*Achievement.* Each assignment in the typical classroom tends to have a certain set of guidelines to which students must adhere. Additionally, professors grading those assignments will have a certain set of standards by which they measure a student's



ability to complete the assignment. The variable *achievement* describes whether or not students met the guidelines and standards for the particular article in question.

To understand a student's textual achievement, one must first understand the specifications for their articles. In terms of the guidelines, they were both article specific and more general to encompass all articles. For a detailed explanation of each article, see Appendix D. In summary, the first article asked students to turn a personal experience from their time at the university into a feature story for the University's magazine. Some students would have the opportunity to be published in the magazine if the piece was "good enough" and if it met the magazine's need.

The second article asked students to educate incoming students and their parents about some aspect of the university, whether the subject was a club, a tradition, a possible activity, the philosophies of a professor, tips for surviving life at the university, etc. As this piece was more informative than the first, some students needed to incorporate research and/or interviews. Students would be published on the orientation website if their piece was "good enough."

The third article asked students to write a review of a local band or restaurant for a local Texas magazine. Students chose the topic and shared their opinions of the subject with the reader. The intent of the assignment, which also utilized interviews, was to give students another opportunity to be published, but the magazine went bankrupt before students could write their articles, making the assignment more hypothetical in nature.

The fourth assignment asked students to interview a previous alumni of the writing program and create a profile of him or her for an online website. The goal of this piece was to make the person "come alive" for the reader by incorporating personal information and quotes from the interviewee. Students would be published on the alumni website if their piece was "good enough."

Generally speaking, the guidelines for each article asked students to adhere to a certain word limit, consider the audience when writing, produce effective leads or catchy titles, mimic the style of the genre, research the particular magazine for which

they were writing, and several other considerations. Students also had to produce writing that would adhere to the specifications of good writing practices, such as attention to grammar, structure, stylistic concerns, etc.

Paula, the professor, set the standards for the course based on what she believed writers should demonstrate for each article. These standards pertain to the guidelines, but she also considered other factors. When grading the articles, she questioned:

Was the angle appropriate for the magazine and appropriate for the audience? Was the student writing about some unusual experience in a vivid way or some average experience in an unusual way? Did the student have a strong lead? Was there a fluency to the sentence structure? Was there an appropriate use of details to bring whatever situation they were writing about to life? Was there a connection to the mission statement, either very implicit or implied, seeing as that was one of the criterion the editor had. Did it fall within 25-30 words of the word count? Was there demonstration of control over basic grammar and mechanics? Did the paragraph seem to be shorter, so again was the student thinking about columns? These were all things that I talked about [during the semester] or the editor talked about (final interview).

These standards helped her determine how well a student performed in the course. If a student met her expectations, then he or she received a high performance rating, namely a high grade for the article. Thus, the grade a student received on the paper determined how successfully he or she was in the variable of Achievement. For a complete list of grades for each student and each student's article, see Table 4.11.

Also in Table 4.11 are the ratings for the two judges in the study based on the standards for the GRE Writing Assessment test (see Appendix C). These standards represent commonly accepted beliefs in the field of writing for what a "good" piece of text should exhibit. In this holistic writing scale, a 6 represents the best possible score and 0 represents the lowest possible score, although this was not awarded unless students failed to turn in their assignment. In summary, the scale "assesses 'analytical

Table 4.11: Performance Results for Each Article by Student (N=21)*						
Name	Article Number	Paula's Score	Paula's Rank	Judge 1 Score	Judge 2 Score	Judges' Rank
Adam	1	90	12	6	6	5
	2	90	12	5	5	10
	3	95	1	6	6	2
	4	96	4	6	6	6
Amata	1	92	9	5	5	14
	2	85	16	5	6	7
	3	80	14	5	5	12
	4	89	14	6	6	3
Andres	1	65	21	4	4	23
	2	55	21	3	3	22
	3	50	20	3	3	20
	4	59	21	4	4	18
Dolores	1	80	19	5	5	20
	2	80	18	4	4	19
	3	70	18	4	4	18
	4	83	19	5	5	15
Gabrielle	1	96	1	6	6	2
	2	95	3	6	6	3
	3	90	6	6	6	1
	4	95	5	6	6	5
Heather	1	94	5	6	6	3
	2	97	2	5	5	16
	3	80	14	5	5	9
	4	95	5	5	5	17
Jan	1	95	4	6	6	1
	2	92	9	6	6	1
	3	87	10	6	6	3
	4	97	2	6	5	10
Jane	1	85	16	4	4	24
	2	70	20	5	5	9
	3	89	9	6	6	4
	4	94	9	6	6	2
Juan	1	96	1	5	5	12
	2	95	3	6	6	5
	3	0	21	N/A	N/A	N/A
	4	95	5	6	6	4
Juanita	1	94	5	6	5	6
	2	94	7	6	6	4
	3	82	12	5	5	10
	4	93	12	5	6	9
Justin	1	80	19	5	5	21
	2	82	17	5	6	6
	3	87	10	6	6	6
	4	85	17	5	5	12

Continued...

Table 4.11 continued						
Laura	1	96	1	6	6	4
	2	92	9	5	5	13
	3	95	1	6	6	5
	4	94	9	6	6	7
Maria	1	90	12	6	5	7
	2	90	12	5	5	12
	3	92	4	4	4	17
	4	95	5	5	5	16
Mora	1	94	5	5	5	8
	2	95	3	5	5	15
	3	90	6	5	6	7
	4	94	9	5	5	14
Pablo	1	90	12	5	5	15
	2	88	14	5	5	8
	3	91	5	5	5	13
	4	92	13	5	5	11
Pam	1	94	5	5	5	9
	2	91	11	5	5	17
	3	82	12	5	5	11
	4	97	2	5	5	13
Pedro	1	89	15	5	5	10
	2	94	7	4	4	18
	3	90	6	4	5	15
	4	78	20	6	6	8
Rob	1	92	9	5	5	17
	2	95	3	5	5	11
	3	78	17	5	5	14
	4	88	16	5	5	19
Rosa	1	92	9	5	5	13
	2	99	1	6	6	2
	3	95	1	5	6	8
	4	100	1	6	6	1
Stacy	1	85	16	4	4	25
	2	75	19	4	4	20
	3	60	19	4	4	16
	4	85	17	5	5	21
Tiffany	1	85	16	5	5	18
	2	83	14	4	4	21
	3	80	14	4	4	19
	4	89	14	4	4	20
<p>* Note: There were 25 students at the beginning of the semester, but only 21 remained at the end. The professor did not keep the scores of those who dropped, so only students who completed the course are reported here.</p>						

writing” and stresses that “critical thinking skills (the ability to reason, marshal evidence to develop a position, and communicate complex ideas) weigh more heavily than the writer’s control of fine points of grammar or the mechanics of writing (e.g., spelling).” Other aspects of the scale and Table 4.11 will be discussed later.

Because success in the variable achievement is determined by a student’s grade in the class or the score he or she received from the judges (recall that the interrater reliability for each assignment was .91, .94, .92, and .88 respectively), then one can determine how successful each student was in the class by looking at Table 4.11. Articles that received A’s (90 or above) or 6’s should be considered more successful than those that received lower scores.

When viewing both the professor’s and the judges’ scores, one might notice some potential discrepancies that can be explained by three caveats. First and foremost, the standards by which the texts were being measured were slightly different. The GRE measure was more generally focused than the professor’s list that incorporated a magazine-based focus. To account for this distinction, the judges applied a magazine focus to the general GRE principles based on the professor’s goals for the course, but the professor’s expertise in the field of magazine writing and her familiarity with the goals she created should still be taken into account.

A second important consideration involves how all raters determined their assessments. As is characteristic of the holistic format, the judges graded the text as a whole by comparing it to a general standard. Thus, each student’s text was compared to this standard. This was not quite norm-referenced scoring because students were not actually compared to each other, but there was a general reference to an ideal for each text. The professor, however, viewed and accounted for each student’s ability before assigning a score. In other words, she determined what she thought a student was capable of performing and made her decision based on that assumption rather than on some general ideal. Furthermore, she assessed the potential of the piece, which differed from the “as is” approach of the judges.

The third and final caveat to the potential performance discrepancies acknowledges the potential bias of the professor towards certain students. As was previously mentioned, Paula had had several of these students in class before and she had a personal relationship with others, either as their advisor or, in some cases, their friend. This history could have and probably did affect her ability to assess certain scores without some partiality to which the judges were not privy.

With these thoughts in mind, one should still notice the relative similarity between the two sources of performance assessments. Thus, a change in achievement within the students' text is measured by the grades and scores the students received on each article throughout the semester. Some changed for the better while others seem to lose focus, as is typical in many writing classrooms.

As a final note to the discussion of achievement, one should note that, because of its attention to both skill- and conceptually-based considerations, the variable corresponds to both the Skill-based Learning and Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension levels of change. Students would need to demonstrate mastery in both of these levels in order to realize higher performance grades. In some cases, the text might also portray some Transformative characteristics, but examples of this level are much clearer in other variables.

*Ranked achievement.* Those who assess texts do not consider a student's achievement without thinking about how well the student performed in comparison to others performing the achievement. Therefore, ranked achievement takes into account certain more stylistic issues when determining a text's effectiveness. Concerns, such as the student's approach, style, tone, structure, level of experimentation, and linguistic presentation, must be considered in order to determine truly the impact of a text. The variable of ranked achievement questions not whether a student can perform certain specifications, but how well the student is able to perform the task as a whole. For this reason, the variable pertains to all three levels of change possible within students (Figure 4.2) because skills, concepts and holistic writing beliefs and/or preferences contribute to a student's ability to produce quality work.

To measure ranked achievement efficiently, it makes sense to consider a student's general achievement score, which is his or her grade or the judges' score. Writers must achieve the task before a rater may assess the quality of the achievement. However, grades and scores do not report how well someone did on a given assignment unless the individual's score is compared to other writers who attempted the same assignment. Thus, ranked achievement is measured by comparatively assessing the grades and scores of a student to other students. This comparison is most easily represented by the rank of the student, which is determined by contrasting students to each other (or in the case of Paula's rank, ranking the grades to each other rather than individual papers because she did not provide information that would distinguish between students with the same grades). The rank for each student can be viewed in Table 4.11. Students with higher ranks (1 is the highest) had higher quality papers because they included more of the important stylistic concerns that readers identify with a well-written piece. The effects of change are determined by looking for improvements in a student's performance and rank throughout the semester as differences within individuals also constitutes a ranked achievement assessment.

Explaining how one assesses ranked achievement is much more difficult than explaining the importance of ranked achievement in effective assessment. When asked in her final interview what made the difference between an "A" and a "B" paper, Paula stated that in the "B" paper "there doesn't seem to be a ... the writer doesn't seem to come alive on the page. The writing, although correct and well-written is somewhat flat, so there is no sense of voice or no sense of style." I then asked whether that meant that a "B" person would grasp the concept and not perform as well to which she replied, "Correct. Or in Pedro's case, Pedro grasped everything and did horrific proofreading. I can tell he never proofread it. If he proofread it...he had all kinds of missing words and typos, things that spell check would have caught." This explains Pedro's lower score on his last article, but it also illustrates that students can improve conceptually without improving their overall ranked achievement. Thus, the text as a whole, with all the components that represent a well-written paper

(grammar, sentence structure, linguistic achievement, structure, style, type of included information, supporting evidence, etc.), determines the quality of the change.

Paula also described how she would assess whether a student improved during the semester by providing some additional examples:

Well, for instance in Justin's case. Just his rapid fire, all over the place, wouldn't slow down, disorganized kind of like-he-talks writing, and the fact that by the end of the semester, you are seeing something much more coherent, much more carefully put together, something that had paragraphing, something that transitions between paragraphs and within paragraphs, appropriate use of quotes. It was a more mature form of writing. In other cases, someone like Adam who already came in with strong magazine writing skills, I was looking for an increase in sophistication and use of language. I was looking for more creative leads and closings. I was looking for greater mastery over interviewing skills, which would be evidenced in the information that would come through in a profile. So it varied for each student.

The judges' scores and ranks were based on similar concepts but with less variation between students. The main differences between each score level in the table (6 being the best and 0 being the lowest score possible) is the amount of detail and reasoning a student used as well as the kind of language used to structure the piece. Thoroughness and the excitement (versus "flatness") also played a part. If students just fulfilled the assignment, they would receive a 4. If the piece exhibited major structural or grammatical problems, it would receive a 3 or lower. To make a 6, students had to "dazzle" the reader with great ideas, a novel approach, sophisticated language usage, or other characteristics that typify good writing. Students who received a 5 showed nice mastery of these considerations, but did not quite meet the same level of expectations as their 6 counterparts. The main differences would be conceptually sound pieces that lacked the spark of detail, presentation, or some other potentially stylistic concern (a 5) versus pieces that consistently impressed, excited, and surprised the reader with their sophistication, creativity, and overall quality (a 6).



Before placing too much emphasis on the ranks and the scores, however, one must first realize that each assignment differed slightly from the preceding article with the exception of the fourth article, which included elements of all articles. Therefore, students could be improving the quality of their magazine writing but struggle with certain aspects of a piece (the inclusion of personal details, learning how to incorporate interviews, creating a profile, etc). For this reason, it is unwise to say that just because a student's scores decreased, then he or she did not experience the effects of positive change. Pedro is a great example of this point because, as Paula indicated, he showed impressive conceptual improvements but he failed to account for seemingly simple considerations, such as using spell check.

Additionally, the ranks can be somewhat deceiving because students could appear to have no change or a decrease in rank, but they could still portray improvements in ranked achievement. Andres is a good example of this point because although he was consistently last in the class (except when other students failed to turn in their papers) and his grades show little improvement, his final text actually represents better work for him than his first piece did in terms of his ability to conceptualize the necessary elements in magazine articles. He experienced some positive changes in his writing (see Andres's case study later in this chapter), but his scores or his rank do not indicate this change, except in the case of the judges' rank. In the case of Adam, he received a 90, 90, 95 and 96 although his ranks from Paula indicate a slightly different story (12, 12, 1, and 4). This illustrates that he made nice changes within himself, but these changes may not have been as great as the changes other students were able to experience.

Despite these caveats, one can tell that students such as Jane and Juan made consistent improvements (despite Juan's missing third article). Furthermore, a look at differences between the first and last assignment, which allows the student to demonstrate the most growth through both time and experience, indicates that many students made some improvements in ranked achievement throughout the semester. A few students, such as Jan and Rob, actually decreased in ranked achievement

depending on whose score and rank one is observing. But as previously mentioned, students could still experience positive change without having this change appear in their ranked achievement. The next variable will illustrate this point.

*Conceptualization.* The final variable that illustrates the effects of change within the students' text pertains to demonstrating the effects of Transformation, the third and most difficult level of change to reach. In terms of performance, conceptualization deals with the students' ability to conceive of the task at hand and how they then go about presenting their ideas for the assignment. This variable accounted for the unique approaches students might have taken to present the information, the kind of information they chose to include, the interviewees they selected or the quotes from the interviews they incorporated. In general, conceptualization illustrates the way in which students conceptualize and then portray the persons, places, or events that make up the subject of their text.

In her first interview, Paula described the way she would know if transformation had occurred:

The way I know it's happened ... often I'll hear it from students. But I see it in their writing. Often it's very subtle. It can be something as simple as a student who has been struggling with transitions suddenly gets transitions. There's an excitement and vitality to the writing that may have been missing earlier when it was kind of flat. I'll also see it in class in terms of non-verbal body language, more attentive, more engaged in what's going on, participating more.

She went on to add: "It has to do with those more abstract concepts of self. So self-confidence, self-worth, a sense on the part of the student that, 'I'm getting this.' And a deeper understanding, but those more abstract harder to pin down concepts that come from sense of self."

When asked to explain in her final interview how evident conceptualization had been in the students' final texts, she stated:

Some of them so clearly “got” the person they were interviewing and really captured them on the page. Some of that might have been because the person they interviewed was really just a great interviewee, but it doesn’t matter how many great quotes you get because the writer still has to do something with it. And so to see whole pieces, for instance I am thinking of Pedro’s work. His profile truly captured [his interviewee] and all the important elements of [his interviewee]. Something was integrated there both in terms of Pedro’s writing skills but also in his confidence as a human being. That interview went well; I can read when an interview went well simply by what I am seeing on the page. So there is a confidence in themselves on the page.

These quotes illustrate that conceptualization is a subtle trait that appears within the students’ writing. Thus, the best measure for whether or not a student experienced a change in conceptualization is an examination of the text itself. The examination includes looking for changes in any of the concepts mentioned above (language usage, the portrayal of the subject, excitement or vitality of the writing, an “ah-ha moment” in which students “get” a concept that has been difficult for them, etc.) Performance and rank will also be helpful indicators, but it is possible for a student to realize changes in conceptualization without showing positive changes in rank or grade due to misconceptions about the assignment, lack of attention to detail, or any other possible factors.

For an example of how conceptualization would appear within the text, we look now to Jan’s first and third articles. Jan was an interesting student to observe because she came in with excellent writing techniques and practices. She was already performing at a level above her peers, a fact befitting of her standing as a Masters of Language Arts student. The experience she brought with her to the course was evident in her text by its sophistication, word choice, and word arrangement. However, she did not initially convert this ability into good practices of magazine writing.

Leads, for example, are the equivalent of an introduction in magazine terms. They must be short yet attention-grabbing or they will not “hook” the reader into reading

further. Thus, vivid, active and descriptive phrases that capture interest are paramount to a successful piece. It is clear from Jan's first article that she lacked this concept.

She began her article with this lead:

In the momentary calm before the breakfast stampeded I sip black coffee and sort through the lawless stacks of paper dominating my desk. There is a short pile with a half-finished grocery list, a dry-cleaning stub and various registration forms; a tall pile of bills (leaning precariously); and a middling pile of homework that includes a description for the final paper due in my "Science, Technology and Society" class.

This sample of text portrays the alluded to sophistication and adeptness at expressing herself. It even conveys a sense of the vivid detail and descriptive phrases that Jan could control. However, the reader needed patience in order to get Jan's meaning as the phrasing was too complex and the description too long. Readers could have conceived this piece as too much work and stop reading.

By her third article, Jan was showing remarkable differences in her approach to the text. She began her third piece with the following:

Austin, late-1990's. The South Congress strip was a farrago of retail outlets and funky, inexpensive restaurants. Shops like "Lucy in Disguise with Diamonds," sporting wildly colorful walls stood cemented to the stark black-and-white of "Yard Dog Folk Art" while a few steps away, Guero's offered patrons downtrodden comforts and a great meal. It was quintessential old Austin.

But old Austin was changing...

Here, Jan captured the gist of the scene she was describing with great feeling. Readers almost feel like they are personally in the scene she describes, but she creates this depiction with a tighter form that conveys more by saying less. Additionally, she sparked readers' interest by allowing them to identify with the scene before making them uncomfortable by saying the object of their new attachments has changed. They

are now invested in discovering how and why the change has occurred and will continue reading.

Therefore, Jan's text reveals a heightened sense of awareness for what makes an effective lead and hook. This change in conceptualization shows that Jan is altering the way she views the style of writing and is able to put the new perceptions into practice. This example also illustrates how a student can experience transformation without experiencing a positive change in performance or rank. Paula gave her a 95 and a rank of 4 on the first article and an 87 with a rank of 10 on the third article. Similarly, the judges gave her an average score of 6 on both articles, but her rank decreased from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> on Article 3.

In another example, Gabrielle's text shows how a student can change how she conceptualizes the type of information to include and how it should be included. Gabrielle chose to write a profile of a professor as her second assignment. In it, she described her subject's philosophies on teaching as:

“I see part of the teacher's role is to get students fired up so that they'll go out of the classroom ready to look into things on their own,” said [the professor]. “Besides,” she continued, “it is hard to sit still and stay awake if the teacher doesn't even seem excited about what's going on.”

In this profile, Gabrielle lets the interviewee speak for herself, which can be a helpful technique. However, the reader does not get a sense for what the professor's classroom looks like, how she goes about “firing up” the students, or of the professor as an individual. Too many quotes in one area can often distract or bore readers. In addition to a small fallacy in how she should incorporate the quotes, Gabrielle also chose quotes that were informative but not quite dynamic enough. If she had selected more descriptive phrases, the reader might have left with a greater sense of the professor. (As readers, we did leave the text with an understanding of who the professor is, but this is not as pronounced as it could be. This text sample is not “bad”

in that it accomplishes its job and it received a 96, rank 1, from Paula and an average score of 6, rank 2, from the judges.)

In her fourth article, Gabrielle creates a more complete picture of her subject by including more personal details and allowing the subject's voice to come through portions of Gabrielle's interpretation of that voice. She stated:

[The interviewee] is greatly enjoying her "boring and conventional" life. She said that she enjoys "the little things in life so much," like spending time with her husband and son. "I feel complete in my life and I feel as if I am floating peacefully down life's brook, living life instead of looking for it."

In this example, Gabrielle was adding to the interviewee's words with details about how the interviewee goes about accomplishing what she refers to in her quote. Additionally, Gabrielle selected the most poignant part of the subject's quotes and interpreted the rest, giving the reader's eyes a break and providing variety. She then leaves us with a well-selected quote that dynamically portrays the subject and her personal philosophies. One gets a better sense of this person than of the first individual through the use of details and the inclusion of the subject's voice, yet Gabrielle did not perform as well on this fourth assignment (95 and a rank of 5 from Paula; combined score of 6, but rank of 5 from the judges).

One final example illustrates how a student can experience changes in achievement (1<sup>st</sup> article=92 and combined score of 5; 4<sup>th</sup> article=100 and combined score of 6), ranked achievement (1<sup>st</sup>=rank of 9 for Paula and 13 for judges; 4<sup>th</sup>=rank of 1 for Paula and 1 for judges), and conceptualization. Rosa performed well throughout the semester, and she seemed to grasp the core concepts, even from the beginning. But she struggled with the idea that writers must "show" what they are saying rather than "telling" the audience what they want them to know. A comparison between the first and the fourth assignments illustrates that she finally grasped this concept.

In the first article, she stated:

But it was not only in the realm of music that I advanced. Through my core classes, as well as electives, I found doors opening to worlds I have never imagined. My mind stretched as I absorbed, in addition to the writing and rhetoric of my major, philosophy, history, foreign cultures, literature, art and even science.

In this text sample, Rosa tells us, the reader, what happened to her rather than providing examples and vivid details of the change she was to experience. This is effective, but it is not as attention grabbing for the audience as it could be. We are intrigued, but we are not feeling the change along with her.

In contrast, here is a sample from her fourth article:

[The interviewee] has an impressive resume for a 24-year-old. She's been Editor-in-Chief of two newspapers, proposed and managed a major project for the Texas Interagency Council for Services for the Homeless, written and designed marketing materials, managed several publications at once, and published award-winning articles.

Here, she makes the statement she wants the reader to come away with concerning the subject's age and her accomplishments, but she allows the details of the subject's accomplishments to show the rest of the story. We are able to draw our own similar conclusions about the subject as a result of Rosa's technique.

Each of these examples illustrates how students can make advances in their learning. These represent changes in conceptualization rather than changes in any other possible variable because the students must change how they perceive their subject and how they then must portray the subject matter according to these perceptions. Conceptualization is difficult to achieve, but the effects are obvious when they occur.

### ***Section Summary***

As the second and final effects of change students can encounter during the semester, the *effects of change within student texts* tends to occur within students' *achievement* (performance capabilities), *ranked achievement* (performance comparative to that of their peers), or *conceptualization* (the ability to present

heightened critical consciousness about self, writing, or others in text). Now that we have explored each of the potential effects, it is helpful to identify the conditions that can produce these effects.

### **Conditional Variables**

Although not made explicit, the effects of change a student can experience often share a relationship with each other, which will become more evident during the discussion of the process by which students move through the model as a whole. However, when we turn to consider the conditions that influence change in students, we cannot avoid mentioning the dynamic relationship among factors. No one factor works in isolation to produce the change in students. The combination of factors exists in differing degrees for different students. For this reason, I will define each variable and show its grounding in my data. Then I will explain the interrelationship of the variables.

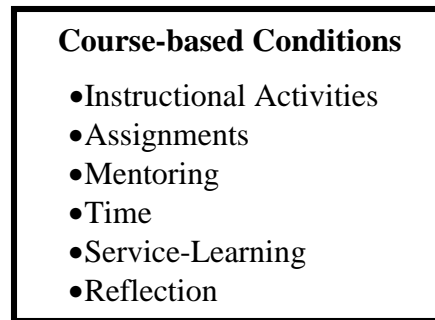
First, it is important to understand the distinction between conditional and causal variables. The variables in this portion of the model are conditional because they are important possible factors, but not all students experience each one. When students do experience the same condition, the effects often differ. Thus, the variables serve as potential conditions that could occur for each student.

Next one must note that the conditions are divided into two different categories: course-based conditions (see Figure 4.5) and individually-based conditions (see Figure 4.6 later in this chapter). Supporting evidence for each variable came from observation, interviews, journal entries, and the questionnaires. Each condition will be explained in turn.

#### ***Course-based Conditions***

These variables are labeled Course-based Conditions because each one pertains to some characteristic of the course under investigation. They become important considerations because they allow one to understand why under certain circumstances, a student who has all the requisite ability to learn from a class does





**Figure 4.5: Course-based Conditions that Influence Change in Students**

not. This point became quite evident during the students’ answers to two questions in Questionnaire 3 (see Table 4.12).

In the first question, 91% of the students felt that a class could facilitate a change in their writing. Of this percentage, 64% strongly agreed with the sentiment. The remaining 9% were neutral on the issue, and there were no disagreements. The second question, which asks whether the particular course under investigation was helping the students to realize a change in their writing, tells a different story. Here, only 68% stated they believed the class would facilitate a change in their writing, with only 36% strongly endorsing this belief. Additionally, 18% adopted a neutral stance while 14% strongly disagreed. This is a change from the first question in

Table 4.12: Student Perceptions of a Course’s Ability to Create Change in Writing (N=22)					
Question: I feel like it is possible for my writing to change because of a class.					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	0	0	2	6	14
Question: I feel like my writing is changing as a result of this class.					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Responses	3	0	4	7	8

which there were no disagreements. In the second question, students not only disagree, but they disagree strongly. The differing responses indicate that there was something about this class that was not working for some students. One must be reminded that a majority of students felt the course was facilitating writing changes in both questions, but there is a noteworthy difference between these two majority votes (91% versus 68%). Thus, the importance of understanding the variables pertaining to a particular class becomes clear. Now, we will explore the variables related to the course in the study.

*Instructional activities.* The kind of activities professors include to facilitate learning in their courses differ according to the goals of the class and the style or preferences of particular professors. The variety of activities (lecture, guest speakers, class discussions, peer review or other forms of group work, etc.), the readings used to supplement the activities, and the strength of the instruction or the activities all become important considerations when determining how successful a class is at creating the opportunity for change.

In her first interview, Paula attributed much of the students' success on the first assignment to these instructional factors. "I think it [the success] is the preparation we [Paula and the editor] did laying the groundwork, the guidelines. I think the fact that they [the students] had sample essays, magazine articles to look at that had been successful, that had been published makes a huge difference. A lot of students learn by example."

Some of the students would agree with her. Dolores mentioned in her interview that she was disappointed with the class because she did not receive enough examples. She thought she would "get more exposure to different kinds of magazine writing" by reading the works of others. For Rosa, however, the readings were enough. She was able to deduce what she called the "reality of magazine writing" because of the variety and the information included within them. "It's not just a fantasy. It's harder than you think. And the readings helped understand that" (interview). Juanita agreed: "The readings help me familiarize myself with what

needs to be written. They also tell me what the audience wants and whether my writings have it” (interview).

Other students felt that it was not the readings themselves that made enough of a difference, but whether or not the students actually read the readings. Tiffany conceded that the readings were helpful, but only to a certain degree because “not enough people read” (interview). Adam admitted that he was one of the students who did not read because he had yet to find a need for the activity: “You get burned sometimes, especially on quizzes, but school doesn’t require you to read. This class is no different” (interview). Justin agreed by stating that he did not read because “we don’t talk about the readings enough in class” (interview).

In addition to the readings, peer review was an influential activity for some students. Juanita stated in her interview: “The peer reviews are helpful because they keep us from turning in bad copies [of the assignments]. Plus, I learn more from the opinions of others. They helped me change my writing completely. I am meeting the reader’s choice now and that’s what matters.” Maria agreed: “Having my work evaluated [by my peers] has been very helpful. I used to be so scared of showing my work to others but now I see that passing my work around will filter the mess of my work to its most precious form, and from there I go on to refine it.” (Q4).

For other students, lecture was an important factor that influenced their learning. Heather felt well-prepared for the tasks she faced during the semester because she was able to learn much of what she needed to know from Paula’s lectures. She said in her interview that she knew how to write for an audience and conduct interviews “because we talked about that in class.” Amata also believed in the effectiveness of the lecture: “Every day I come to class, I learn something new” (interview). Pedro felt that the lectures are beneficial because Paula was “really technical and that is necessary” (interview).

A final consideration that came up in relation to this variable was the use of guest speakers in the classroom. Students tended to love them or disregard them. For Amata, the speakers made the class “exceed her expectations” because “they are so

varied and informative. It is better than a workshop” (interview). Mora did not find the speakers helpful because she did not feel they related enough to her interests. “They were interesting, but not helpful to me personally” (interview).

Each of these considerations illustrate that what is important for instructional activities is variety because different students will respond differently to the same activities. Students tended to agree that lecture was beneficial, but they often had strong positive responses to activities, such as peer review or guest speakers, that provided an alternative. Additionally, readings had the potential to be influential, but successful influence depended on the variety of the topics the texts discussed and how much attention each student gave to the readings, a condition that ranged from no exposure to multiple readings. Thus, there was variation even within this single variable.

*Assignments.* One of the factors the students made the most reference to was the kind of assignments they had to write for the course. All students mentioned how they felt about the assignments at some point during their interviews. In the third questionnaire, the students even ranked the importance of each article in facilitating their learning. (The students as a group showed a preference for the first article assignment, although those who did not enjoy this article felt very passionately about their displeasure.)

What came out of all of these discussions was the realization that students responded to what the assignments asked of them personally during the production of the text. Some students, such as Maria, responded to the personal nature of the first assignment. For example, Gabrielle said the first assignment “was a good one to start out with because you are using your own experience and you don’t have to worry about interviews” (interview). Stacy found it enjoyable “because I got to reflect back on my experience as a student” (interview). On the other hand, others found the lack of objectivity difficult. Heather found the personal aspects to be challenging: “I thought it would be easy to talk about my opinions, but it wasn’t” (interview). Jan agreed during her interview: “I am a bit uncomfortable with how open writing

sometimes is, but maybe that is on purpose.” Juanita responded to general differences in all of the assignments in her interview: “The articles are different in terms of their content and purpose. How you are writing is important. Some rely on interviews while others are personal and that changes the writing.”

Other students responded to their perceptions of certain assignment specifications. Gabrielle found the last article to be the most difficult because “it was hard to get the information I needed. People weren’t as accessible” (interview). Laura stated that she liked the first assignment “because it felt more creative and I enjoyed editing for [the editor’s] needs” (interview). Pam found the second and third articles to be challenging because “they involved more research and required more preparation” (interview). Rob found the third difficult because “it was harder to go through the descriptive process” (interview). Tiffany stated, “You can’t really compare the [first two] articles because the first was about self while the second was a student publication, something not me” (interview).

Each of these examples indicates that change in students is dependent on how easily a student can produce the required specifications. If students have a difficult time with certain elements, then the difficulty (or ease) will affect their feelings towards the assignment. Furthermore, the nature of the assignment (the kind of assignment) influences how students feel about the assignment, which determines what students are able to learn from it. Seemingly, the more students believe in the assignment and its purpose, the more they will benefit when they are asked to engage in the task of producing it. Justin would agree with this final statement. The assignments “are hands-on enough to where I am learning a great deal” (interview).

*Mentoring.* One of the factors that students often cited when discussing what enabled them to learn in a class was the mentoring they received from professors and from other students. This class was no exception. The mentoring usually took the form of feedback. For instance, Maria had an admitted problem with excessive wordiness, but she said Paula’s feedback helped her correct this issue. She found

Paula's comments "helpful" and "not at all offensive despite what I had heard" (interview).

Laura felt that peer feedback was especially helpful, stating that it was one of the perks of the course. She said in her interview, "The [the students in the] class gives you everything you need." When referring to what she thinks causes transformation, she was less specific: "...feedback, feedback, feedback." Amata found peer feedback to be helpful "although I wish some of the critiques would be more substantial. I learn more that way."

Many students, such as Jane, endorsed the feeling that writers benefit from feedback from multiple sources. Mora stated this sentiment in very clear language: "I believe the changes in my writing come from feedback from my peers and the professor" (Q4). Justin explained his need for both. He stated that, before each assignment, he wrote a rough draft and had a peer review it first "because I suck at editing" (interview). He knew he had a deficiency in this area, which his peer's feedback corrected, because past professors had told him his editing needed work: "Even [Paula] said that I lack in editing, but I have the voice and the talent" (interview). He corrected the deficiency through the support he received from his professor, which he found helpful because "you have multiple brains thinking at once and sharing ideas" (interview). Paula also believed that her feedback was helpful in addition to the general support she felt she provided. During her first interview, she explained that the key to a students' development from the first to the last assignment would be "lots of feedback. Lots of feedback on the paper they got back so they can truly understand not only what are their strengths but what were their weaknesses and my feedback is very extensive. I model for them a lot. Then also I think if they will do more than one draft and if they will actually get some help, whether that's from me or the writing center."

These examples illustrate the importance of mentoring as a form of guidance for the students. As writers, the students wanted information on their textual progress and how they could improve. In some cases, students preferred peers to review their work

because it caused “less pressure” (Jane, Q4) than having the professor review it or because it reaffirmed what Paula had been teaching them. On the other hand, some students preferred the professor’s comments because “she is the ultimate authority” (Justin, interview) and her opinion made a difference, both in terms of the students’ final grades and their potential acceptance as members of the magazine writing community.

*Time.* One of the elusive factors that students referred to was the general concept that the amount of time they had would influence how much they were able to change. In some cases, time referred to where assignments occurred in the semester (Pablo, Garbielle, interviews). Seemingly, these students felt they would be changed by the cumulative events of the course. In other instances, the students felt that time was something that they needed in order to complete an assignment but they often did not have as a result of other coursework or activities (Stacy, Juanita, Dolores, Tiffany, interviews). Specifically, Juan stated in his interview, “We have time in this class, but the readings are too much.” Rosa felt that time was a positive factor in helping her to accomplish her goals: “There is enough time between articles and they are short enough, so I am making them the best I can possibly make them” (interview). Finally, students mentioned that time was one of the necessary components of transformation as a specific kind of change: “The conditions for transformation are time, success, failure, trials, tribulations, laughter, tears and common purpose. You are asking too much of any class to accomplish that” (Jan, Q4). So time became an important condition, but as the quote indicated, it did not act alone. Allusions to time are also often allusions to experience (as in the case of time in the semester). Therefore, the variable is described here, but it will receive more attention in conjunction with other variables. For now, suffice it to say that time was important in terms of how much is available, when in the semester an assignment occurred, and when factors were occurring in relation to each other (were they competing for time?).

*Service-learning.* As previously mentioned, the particular course under investigation was selected because of its inclusion of a service-learning component.

Therefore, it is not unusual that service-learning became a factor in facilitating change in students. However, the factor is conditional because there is some question from me, some of the students, and even the professor as to whether or not the structure of the designated assignments could actually be considered service-learning. At any rate, the initial goals of the professor were for at least one article (the fourth article and possibly the second) to be a service-learning project. This meant that class time was devoted to the concept of service-learning, the final assignment included a service (whether it actually was is a question to be answered later), and students were aware that they were supposed to be experiencing the effects of a service-learning project. Thus, the variable *service-learning* became a conditional factor despite the fact that a service may never have been performed.

Because service-learning was an initial focus of the study, more background is needed to explain its presence in the course. In her initial interview, Paula explained her reasons for including a service-learning component:

Because at its very essence, magazine writing DOES provide a service. Certainly there's an entertainment aspect, but even that is a service—to readers.

I wanted to make this class as real world as possible. I wanted them to interact with editors. The fact that the editors they are working with for the two service-learning projects are [the university] staff can help students work out of a knowledge base they are familiar with, so there's some security built in to allow them to take risks.

I also believe firmly in the concept of service learning and if it fits in with the Mission Statement of the University.

When asked a follow-up question about her goals for the service-learning projects, she responded:

That all the pieces will be publishable. That students will have to stand outside themselves and learn about someone else, learn how to interview, and put that together into a compelling portrait. That they might learn something about career possibilities with their degree.



That they will have a sense of satisfaction in providing a service to future English Writing majors and to English Writing alumni. That they will have fun. That they will learn something about themselves and/or their writing.

The goals make it clear as to why the students would report each of these desires as learning outcomes but still be undecided as to whether or not they were performing a service. The piece that distinguishes service-learning from experiential learning is the opportunity to perform a service for the community and to walk away with the understanding that one's efforts truly benefited that community. The question in this study then becomes does providing a service within or for the university constitute enough of a service for students to realize a heightened sense of social awareness? This question becomes an important consideration because it explains the ambiguity inherent within this conditional variable, which affects its ability to influence learning.

Before revealing the potentially causal properties of this variable, let us first explore the ambiguity. From the beginning of the semester, the professor talked about the concept of service-learning as it is most often considered, the idea of integrating learning in the real world with the objectives of the classroom by performing a community service and reflecting on the results and/or impact. She then told the students that their service would benefit prospective students and their parents or English Writing alumni. However, several students with previous service-learning experience and even some who had no previous exposure (see Table 4.13 from Q1) felt that this type of service did not count as true service.

<b>Table 4.13: Students' Past Experience with Service-Learning</b> <b>(N=25)</b>	
<b><u>Amount of Experience</u></b>	<b><u>Number of Endorsements</u></b>
None	13
Limited (1 or 2 classes)	6
Some (3 or 4 classes)	5
<b>EXTENSIVE: (5+ CLASSES)</b>	1

The beginnings of the discrepancy became obvious in the students' responses in Questionnaire 4. When asked how they felt about the fourth article, which was directed towards alumni and was labeled the service-learning project, the students discussed the benefits they experienced. These benefits are categorized in Table 4.14. These responses illustrate that several students felt the article "provides a service or sense of community" or that it "provides information to others" while other students said the "class didn't offer service-learning" and "the articles were not really more beneficial than those in other classes." Of the 10 students who made the latter responses, six went on to offer that the reason the class was not service-learning is because the articles were categorized as "not serving the community outside [the university]." Two additional students offered that the articles "felt like an assignment rather than a service."

Student interviews further confirmed the discrepancy by showing the differing perspectives of the students and their opinions of the benefits service-learning produces. Heather felt, "The service-learning articles seem more important because they were emphasized in class. There's more of a chance that they will get published because there's a real need for them. It is also easier to connect to the audience in

<b>Table 4.14: Student Perceptions of Benefits from the Service-Learning Project (N=20)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Writing practice	10
Provides a service or sense of community	<b>6</b>
Provides real-world experience	6
Class didn't offer service-learning	5
Learned new skills	5
Provides information to others	5
The articles were not really more beneficial than those in other classes	5
Contact/networking	3
Others will read the article	3
<b>PERSONALLY BENEFICIAL</b>	3

these pieces.” Juanita not only stated that service-learning was beneficial but that it was something that should be required of student writers: “It’s part of our duty as writers to help write for the university.” Justin felt the benefits came not from the outcome of the article but during its production: “The service pieces are easier to write because I like to help others. I can envision my audience’s needs better if my writing will benefit them in some way.”

Yet these students seemed to be in the minority. In his responses to Questionnaire 4, Pablo stated, “Honestly, I never gave it [service-learning] much importance or never really acknowledged it during the semester other than that I was aware of it. I do think it’s an interesting thing to do. I’m not sure of its impact in all classes, though. It might be different.” Jan expressed a similar opinion: “The service didn’t make that big of a difference because I understood that I am doing a service, but I am still doing an article” (interview). During her interview, Mora added, “I know it’s service-oriented but that’s not what I’m thinking about when I’m writing it. I focus on who I’m writing for and what I’m supposed to accomplish.” Jane also acknowledged that she was performing a service, but that characteristic of the project did not make as much of a difference to her as the exposure she would receive did: “The service didn’t make as big of a difference as writing for an editor did” (interview).

The students in the above examples felt they were performing a service although the service did not seem to have a greater impact than the article itself would. Some students were not even certain that what they were doing was a service: “I was not really too sure what the service learning component of the project would be until recently” (Maria, Q4). Other students did not feel that what they were doing constituted as a service: “I don’t feel like it is service-learning. I feel like I should be doing more service. Right now, I am just doing my job” (Adam, interview). Laura added, “I never felt a great service in any of them. I felt I was serving myself by getting them published. I put the same energy into all of them” (interview).

A few students pointed out that the reason they did not feel the service had as big of an impact as it could have was because it was performed within the university

community instead of within the greater community outside the university: “This was so closely related to school. It’s hard to see the distinction when others are typically serving someone outside of class” (Pedro, interview). Tiffany elaborated on this point during her interview: “The assignments didn’t really meet my expectations because there is so much of a focus on [the university]. I am not sure if that’s good or bad. It gives a smaller audience, but it’s not real world. Well, maybe it is but on a smaller scope.”

Despite the confusion, the students seem to indicate that service-learning can be beneficial if it is properly instated within the classroom. In Questionnaire 4, Maria endorsed this opinion and gave suggestions for how to keep the proper focus during assignments:

I feel that classes that incorporate a service learning project are extremely beneficial. They not only help out the person who is intended to benefit from the project, but they also work out well for the people conducting the service learning project. I do, however, feel that at times the service learning component is not stressed enough, or it can even be stressed so much. In any case, it should be pointed out what the goals of the project are, and these should be stressed as much as the assignment in order to ensure a better exertion of potential.

Even Paula expressed in her final interview that, even though the students met her intended goals for the project (“That the students not only learned the concept, technique, material more deeply than they would have in the classroom, in other words integrated it more deeply, but that they have also discovered something about themselves”), they missed certain crucial benefits that are commonly attributed to service-learning, namely service. When asked whether or not she felt the students achieved her goals, she said:

I think the first part was achieved for most students. My guess is that the second was achieved by many students to varying degrees...I think in the magazine writing class, the fact that this is so university based, they were moved out of their comfort zone, most of them, in that they had to interview. Most of them interviewed people they didn’t know at

all, the fact that they were doing interview over email or phone, but I don't think they got the service part, and I don't think they will until they see that magazine online. I don't think it is real to them in that way.

The belief of members of the course as to whether or not what the semester's assignments were legitimately service-learning becomes important when trying to decipher the potential effects of this conditional variable. At the midpoint of the semester, students responded to questions about the potential benefits of service-learning in Questionnaire 2 (see Table 4.15). In their response to the first question, 83% felt service-learning would be beneficial with 61% showing strong endorsement of the belief. Thirteen percent were not sure, and 4% disagreed. Thus, a majority of the class expected service-learning to provide them with some benefits.

The second question in Table 4.15 illustrates how many students felt that service-learning could produce transformation specifically. Their responses indicated that 70% felt that it could with 26% strongly endorsing this belief. Twenty-six percent were not sure and 4% disagreed. The majority of student answers indicated that they

<b>Table 4.15: Student Perceptions of Service-Learning as a Possible Agent of Change (N=23)</b>					
Question: I think service-learning will be beneficial for me.					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	0	1	3	5	14
Question: I feel service-learning can produce transformation.					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	0	1	6	10	6

felt service-learning could produce transformation, although this number is lower than the overall belief that it is generally beneficial.

Later in the semester, however, the number of students who felt it was actually benefiting them had decreased. When asked on Questionnaire 3 (N=22) whether the statement, “The service-learning articles help me learn about writing for magazines” was “true of me” or “not true of me”, 68% of the students felt that it was with 36% of those students strongly feeling the articles were helpful. Eighteen percent were not sure, and 14% disagreed. Although the students had not yet written the last article, which was to be their service-learning project, the perceptions of effectiveness for the concept seemed to be decreasing. However, a majority of the students still did feel that the articles were beneficial, leading to several conclusions.

Service-learning can be an excellent factor in facilitating change in students if it is implemented appropriately in the classroom. If the service performed is not beneficial to the community at large, then the realized effects resemble more experiential learning outcomes (similar results minus the greater awareness of self and community). Even if the service is benefiting others in the community (which was the belief of some students), the project as it is structured must match the original goals for the project. Furthermore, service-learning is not as beneficial for some students if they do not realize the effects of their participation in the project, a feat that is determined by the amount of reflection the students experience (to be discussed next). Thus, for the variable of service-learning, we can say that the potential for change may be conditional on the degree to which it is implemented in the classroom (ranging from central focus to side interest), how well it is implemented (well to poor), how effective the service is (very to not at all), and the degree to which students understand their role as a service provider (clear to misunderstood). If none of these considerations are met, the students still may reap the benefits of this variable. After all, even the students who did not feel they were participating in a service-learning project still talked about their heightened awareness of audience, improved understanding of magazine writing, and more developed skills. Yet, a poorly utilized service-learning variable will leave students unable to distinguish the articles they are writing from appropriate service-learning projects because they will

appear different only in the audience being addressed and the purpose behind the articles. Thus, students will be benefiting from the aspects of the assignment rather than the service piece inherent within the assignment specifications.

*Reflection.* The previous section mentions the importance of reflection (thinking, discussing, or writing about a subject in order to understand it better) as a potential agent for change. Reflection differs from instructional activities because it asks the students to process the learning they receive from an activity or event. It is an important and critical concept for service-learning because it is said to connect the service the students perform with the learning the professor intends for them to receive. Because of these reasons, reflection was a major part of the initial focus for this study, especially because little is known about how reflection facilitates learning. Thus, many of the questions asked to the students and the professor dealt with this aspect. The result, not surprisingly, was that reflection became one of the conditions that enable change in students, although some students found it to be more helpful than others.

Before proceeding into the discussion of reflection as a variable, it is helpful to understand more about it. During her first interview, Paula provided an eloquent description of the purpose and goals of reflection:

The purpose is to get them to think about what they have done, make connections to previous experiences and current experiences and hopefully even project into the future in terms of how they could use whatever they've learned. It's to get them out of simply performing an assignment and truly thinking about how this integrates into their life and skill sets and who they are as a person. And so I think that the goal then becomes integrating learning into the whole self across the curriculum and across their lives, making connections in that way. It's not just one class but all classes and learning outside the classroom.

Here reflection becomes an activity in which students actively think about their actions, their knowledge, and themselves to cultivate further learning, which

seemingly manifests itself both within the classroom and within the student. The learning is not limited in any way and impacts the whole person.

The students originally had similar ideas about the impact of reflection although their beliefs seemed to change throughout the semester. On the second questionnaire, students were asked several questions about the potential influence of reflection and specifically of metawriting (writing about writing). The results appear in Table 4.16. The phrases in quotes were actual definitions and possible uses of reflection the students stated in the first questionnaire.

These six questions illustrate how students felt reflection could impact them. In Question 1, 78% indicated that they found personal benefit in reflection with 52% strongly agreeing, 22% giving a neutral response and no students disagreeing. Students were either not sure of how reflection would affect them personally or they agreed with the statement. The term “personally beneficial” was a bit vague, however, so it is somewhat unclear as to how each individual might have interpreted the term.

When asked specifically about metawriting, students were not as convinced about the impact as indicated by fewer strong “true of me” votes, were more uncertain as indicated by more neutral votes, and disagreed more often. A positive response still reflected a majority of the students’ beliefs, but the endorsements were not quite as strong. For Question 2, 61% indicated that they thought reflection would help them understand or grow with 30% strongly agreeing, 30% giving a neutral response, and 9% disagreeing. Although this variable also illustrates that a majority of the students felt that reflection could help them “understand” or “grow,” this question still produced the lowest overall endorsement of all six questions. Fewer students, however, disagreed with this question than any of the questions dealing with metawriting. This suggests that students were more uncertain about metawriting’s ability to help them develop.



<b>Table 4.16: Student Perceptions of the Influence of Reflection in Questionnaire 2 (N=23)</b>					
Question 1*: The process of reflection, or “thinking about something you have done,” is beneficial for me personally.					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	0	0	5	6	12
Question 2: I think writing about my writing will help me “understand” or “grow.”					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	1	1	7	7	7
Question 3: I think writing about my writing will help me “reconsider previous knowledge, beliefs, or feelings.”					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	1	2	5	11	4
Question 4: I think writing about my writing will help me “improve as a person” or achieve “positive personal improvement.”					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	1	3	7	8	4
Question 5: I think writing about my writing will “produce new insight,” “open my eyes,” or make me “aware of differences.”					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	1	2	5	8	7
Question 6: I believe reflection can produce transformation.					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	0	0	6	7	10
* Note: The question numbers do not reflect the order in which the questions appeared in the questionnaire. The questions were renumbered to ease the discussion about them.					

In Question 3, 68% indicated that they felt reflection could help them “reconsider previous knowledge, beliefs, or feelings” with 18% strongly agreeing, 23% giving a neutral response, and 14% disagreeing. This question illustrates that students more

favorably supported the ability of metawriting to help them reconceptualize their understanding, perceptions and emotions than any of metawriting's other potential outcomes. Fewer students were neutral in their response than in the previous question, indicating that they were more certain about the possible impact. Thus, it seems that students felt that metawriting either would or would not help them reconsider certain aspects of their learning.

Question 4 provides interesting information because, when compared to the first question, it offers insight into student perceptions of differences between reflection and metawriting. For this question, 52% indicated that they found personal benefit in writing about their writing with 17% strongly agreeing, 30% giving a neutral response, and 17% disagreeing. The results still represent a favorable majority response but a slim one. This question also produced the highest disagreement. Apparently, students find the act of writing about writing less beneficial than the more general concept of reflection. This could attest to student preferences for writing versus another reflexive activity such as discussion, or it could suggest that students desired an activity that is less intrusive and would only be "beneficial for me personally" rather than one that would help "improve me as a person." At any rate, both questions seem to indicate that students felt that reflection and metawriting were capable of producing these kinds of outcomes.

In Question 5, 65% indicated that metawriting could help facilitate an awakening of some kind, with 30% strongly agreeing, 22% giving a neutral response, and 13% disagreeing. This response was similar to those found in Questions 2 and 3, so it illustrates how students felt towards the ability of writing about writing to produce new insight, and they tended to support the belief that this outcome was possible for them.

Finally, 74% of students answering Question 6 indicated that they believed reflection in general could produce transformation, with 43% strongly agreeing, 26% giving a neutral response, and no students disagreed. As in Question 1, students tended to endorse the potential impact of reflection rather than the more specific form

of reflection, metawriting. This question produced more neutral responses than the first, but neither showed any disagreement. Thus, students either believed in the power of reflection in their lives or they were not sure.

Later in the semester, however, when asked about the specific reflection activities implemented in the class (journals, discussion, and questionnaires), the perceptions are not quite as favorable (see Table 4.17). In Question 1, 50% viewed the reflection activities as beneficial with 9% strongly endorsing this view, 23% remaining neutral, and 27% disagreeing. This suggests that half of the students were not getting much out of the reflection components even though previous questionnaires indicated that they valued reflection. These particular reflection activities were too work intensive and not open-ended enough for the students' liking. While 50% said they received benefits, only 9% felt strongly about this position.

<b>Table 4.17: Student Perceptions of the Influence of Reflection in Questionnaire 3 (N=22)</b>					
Question 1*: The reflection components are helping me understand what is going on with my writing.					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	3	3	5	9	2
Question 2: The reflection components are helping me understand what is going on with more personal issues in my life (my feelings, my views, etc.).					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	6	3	6	3	3
Question 3: I value writing about my writing.					
Range	Not true of me				True of me
Rank	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Responses	1	4	4	7	6
* Note: The question numbers do not reflect the order in which the questions appeared in the questionnaire. The questions were renumbered to ease the discussion about them.					

Question 2 is the only question in both sets to illustrate that students experienced a disconnect with reflection. Although students in the previous questionnaire

indicated that reflection could help them with more personal benefits, these reflection activities clearly were not meeting their desired purpose. Here, 27% strongly agreed that the reflection components were personally beneficial with 14% strongly agreeing, 27% remaining neutral, and 41% disagreeing. Thus, reflection activities in the class seemed to benefit more class-related issues, indicating that it might not be as transformative as originally imagined.

In the final question, more students (comparatively) valued metawriting than in the previous questionnaire. Here, 59% indicated that they valued writing about their writing, with 27% strongly agreeing, 18% remaining neutral, and 23% disagreeing. Thus, while the opinions of reflection as a whole seemed to decrease, the popularity of metawriting seemed to increase.

By the end of the semester, the general feeling from classroom observation was that students were tired of all forms of writing, including the reflection pieces. Some students seemed really to enjoy participating in the activities while others were just ready for the semester to be over. For this reason, plus the fact that little truly conclusive evidence can be taken from the numerical evidence gathered in Questionnaires 2 and 3 besides trends in student perceptions, Questionnaire 4 asked

<b>Table 4.18: Student Perceptions of Reflection Benefits During the Semester (N=20)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Helped provide insight about assignments ( <i>Conceptual, Transformative</i> )	7
No text benefits evident	6
Gain knowledge ( <i>Skill-based, Conceptual</i> )	5
Prewriting preparation ( <i>Skill-based, Conceptual, Transformative</i> )	4
Helped me know what I like ( <i>Transformative</i> )	2
Helped recognize skills one has ( <i>Skill-based</i> )	2

students to consider their general feelings towards reflection. Table 4.18 represents what the students believed were the main benefits of reflection. Students who felt they received little to no benefit from the activities described the reasons for their discontent and these are presented in Table 4.19.

<b>Table 4.19: Reasons for Ineffective Reflection (N=20)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Must ask the right questions	2
Too little time	2

Some students also described their discontent very explicitly. Amata stated, "I found that reflecting did not help my writing at all this semester. This type of journaling seems like it would be more appropriate for a personal essay class or something like that" (Q4). Heather seemed uncertain about how she benefited from reflection. "Reflexive journals made me more aware of the different skills I was practicing in each article and of which ones I found particularly valuable. I don't think they actually affected my current writing though" (Q4). She mentioned that she become more aware of skills, but she did not consider this to be a benefit for her writing. Justin also sent a few mixed signals in his comment: "I am not sure that reflection happened for me in the classroom this semester in this class; however, talking separately with my peers, I was able to reflect on my work. I did a lot of reflection through email with my classmates." Thus, he had issues with the kind of reflection (written versus oral) being used rather than reflection itself.

Many in the class were very clear on the benefits of reflection. In her first interview, Paula stated why she felt it was important to include reflection in the course (see Table 4.20). Her beliefs expressed that reflection allowed students to find what needed improving, to determine if they were capable of those improvements, and to apply the needed facilities to the improvement. These sentiments are so globally stated that they apply to many types of benefits.

<b>Table 4.20: Categorized Professor's Perceptions of Reflection Benefits for Students</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies what needs improving</li> <li>• Identifies what students do well</li> <li>• Identifies how to improve</li> </ul>

The students were more specific in their discussion on how reflection had benefited them during the semester. For example, Maria stated that she benefited from reflection, but only in regards to her personal life rather than in areas that related to the course:

[Reflection] helped me become a little grateful for what I have. I've never been one to let my personal life interfere with my professional life (I'm a professional student, wouldn't you agree?), and so reflection has not impacted my writing assignments too much. In my own writing, it has helped me figure things out about myself and about what I want and about how happy I really am with many aspects of my life.

Juanita felt that reflection benefited her writing process and her ability to process the readings for the class:

Reflection affected my writing in the revision stage. By looking at what I did and what the desired outcome was supposed to be, I was able to look back at my writing and make some corrections. It also helped me understand several of the readings...In order to give an opinion about something, I have to understand it fully—so I struggled to understand the readings before I wrote about them and what I didn't understand I also wrote about it and questioned it. (Q4)

Laura indicated that reflection helped her develop confidence in her writing: "I would have said it [reflection] didn't impact my writing until recently. I realize now looking back that I did pay attention to what I was saying in the journal and it did affect me. I believe my self confidence increased when I realize how insecure I was and that there

was very little evidence for the insecurity" (Q4). And Juan felt that reflection benefited his work in the assignments:

Reflection greatly impacted my writing this semester, especially my writing for the [first assignment]. It allowed me to be honest. While writing the article, I thought, has majoring in English Writing really been a great experience for me? Reflection made me see that some aspects of my college career have indeed been great. Other aspects I wish to forget. This was conveyed in my writing. (Q4)

Some students even identified how reflection can play a part in the development of transformation. When asked if she experienced transformation during the semester, Pam responded, "No, I did not reflect enough for transformation to occur" (Q4). Stacy, however, did feel she experienced transformation because of reflection: "I think the conditions needed for transformation to occur are, reflection and improvement. I think you need to look back and reflect on something and change it in order to see transformation. I think these were in place. I was able to look at the previous articles done for this class and reflect on them and improve on them" (Q4). Laura also mentioned the potential influence of reflection on transformation in more hypothetical terms: "The reflection on the experience is what will produce the wisdom and transformation. After any significant experience I always want to solidify it by asking 'what did I learn' and answering in a way that I can return to later when I face those issues again" (Q4). These students credit reflection with not only the ability to produce change, but theoretically the most difficult kind of change to realize.

One student even made recommendations on how students could experience reflection more effectively: "When performing this activity, we must not build a wall between ourselves and our emotions. We must allow ourselves to think about something—anything—even if it's painful. Someone would want to reflect because it's often therapeutic. I know that when I reflect on my sister's death, for instance, I

am forced to deal with my emotions, emotions I might have ignored in the past" (Juan, Q4).

In all, these answers reflect students' personal preferences for kinds of reflection and their feelings on what makes good reflection. Conditions such as the nature of the questions (structured or open), the relevance of the questions to the course, the kind of reflection being experienced, and how frequently students are asked to reflect all become important considerations when assessing just how effective reflection can be at producing benefits. The answers differ for each student because personal preferences play a role in the effectiveness. For example, activities such as metawriting produced generally favorable responses, but certain students had more of a preference for this type of reflection than others. Also how often students make use of journaling outside of class on an individual basis can possibly interfere with those who journal for class because they can feel forced to do activities they find personally beneficial. Such students could also take offense to more structured reflection tools such as journal entries that require answers to specific questions. Thus, there is much variety for professors who wish to implement reflection in their class to consider, yet the student and professor responses included here seem to indicate that, for the most part, discovering how to make reflection work is worth the effort. After all, without effective reflection, students "just cruise along without realizing that they've learned anything or that there is anything more to learn here...[reflection is] making them think about their writing choices and their writing process in a much more conscious manner than they are used to" (Paula, final interview).

### ***Section Summary***

As the first of two groups of conditions that contribute to a student's potential for change in a semester, *course-based conditions* represent the basic components associated with the course in which students are enrolled. Briefly, these conditions are the variety and type of *instructional activities* used, the nature and specifications of the *assignments*, the amount, frequency, and type of *mentoring* a student receives, the *time* allotted for text preparation, the inclusion of *service-learning* in the course, and

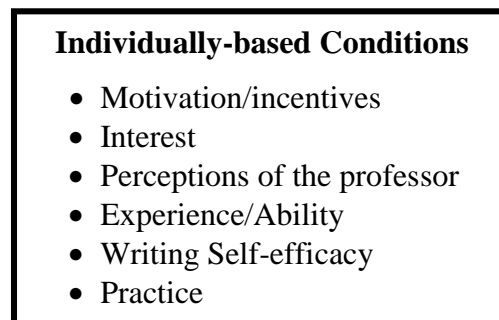


the amount and nature of *reflection*. We will now discuss the second group, known as *individually-based conditions*.

### ***Individually-based Conditions***

The variables in this group are called individually-based conditions because they are factors inherent within or under the direct control of the individual. These are characteristics the students bring with them into the classroom that often interact with how one responds to course-based conditions. For a list of the variables, see Figure 4.6. Each of these will be discussed in turn. (Please note that the supporting evidence for each of these variables came from student interviews unless otherwise indicated.)

*Motivation/incentives.* This variable considers why students perform certain activities, what they hope to get out of the activities or the course in general, how they value learning, the class, or the assignments, why students enrolled, and any other potential considerations students might have that would suggest their willingness to



**Figure 4.6: Individually-based Conditions that Influence Change in Students**

benefit from the class in any way. Often a willingness to be open to change affects whether or not one is able to experience the change. Maria put this belief into words in her response to Questionnaire 4: “There must be a will on behalf of the individual to change and there must be reinforcements that will lessen any obstacles that occur because of the change” (Q4). Thus, a student’s frame of mind when approaching a task or the course is an important matter to consider.

In their interviews, some students talked about whether or not they felt they were learning in the course. Maria said that she was because she was ready to learn: “I am learning in here. I came in with an open mind because I had no expectations.” Tiffany felt that she was learning, but she was not as happy with the result up to that point in the semester. She attributed her discontent to the recurrent problem of procrastination when she faced something she did not want to do: “I wait until the last minute and my grades reflect that. Right now I have a B.” Mora had a more optimistic outlook on her experience because she had a natural incentive that would support her gratification: “I have enjoyed the writing because I have journalistic and other writing aspirations. I just love to write.”

Other students seemed to respond to certain aspects of the assignments when discussing their motivation to benefit from the tasks. Jane mentioned a preference for work that mimicked more realistic conditions: “The restaurant review was the most realistic because it wasn’t about [the university], so it was more fun. I also think there is more pressure when you must write for an editor rather than a school assignment. I feel more confident when I don’t have to submit my work outside the classroom.”

This quote also refers to her self-efficacy as a writer, but it illustrates how her perceptions of the possible outcomes of the finished product contributed to those feelings. Juanita also showed a preference for the fourth assignment because it “feels like it is the real deal.” Additionally, she enjoyed the second assignment because it enabled her to network and get to know a beloved campus professor: “You get to know the person behind the professor and learn things you don’t know as a student.”

Still other students mentioned a willingness to approach certain tasks based on the perceived outcomes of the tasks. Justin stated, “The process of writing makes me nervous because I feel like I will be judged both now and in the future.” For him, the idea that people he respected would hold him accountable for his work made writing more challenging. Andres, however, felt the writing was more enjoyable because he could use the final product in ways that would benefit his future. He said participating in the class “will look good on a resume” and that his reason for “trying” in the

course was “to do good writing to follow-up my PR.” In contrast, Juan could see no benefit for one assignment, so he failed to do it because “it would not improve my ability. I didn’t see the point.”

Therefore, motivation as a variable highlighted how students could experience change depending on the degree to which they value the assignments or the perceived outcomes and their willingness to be open to learning (ranging from high to low).

*Interest.* Another variable that is similar to motivation is interest, which refers to how invested students were in the subject matter of either the class or the assignments. Interest is important because, as Jane said, “I don’t write well about things that don’t interest me.” Amata agreed, “It’s easier to write when I’m interested.”

Students who cited this variable as a reason for getting involved in the course and eventually benefiting from the involvement tended to do so in reference to their interest in the assignments. For example, Jan stated, “I liked the first article best because it was interesting. People are interesting...Students should be allowed to write articles that relate to them. Professors would get better work.” Rob agreed because when asked what made the difference in assignments for him, he said “subject matter.” For Laura, her dislike of the third assignment went beyond the standard “it wasn’t interesting or creative” (Maria). “I didn’t like the third assignment because I couldn’t find anything to be passionate about. I was looking for a small part of me in there, but there was no place to identify” (Laura).

While Stacy liked the third article because of its subject matter, she did not like the second one for the same reason: “That’s [Article 2] also the one I didn’t do well on. The subject matter wasn’t my first choice.” In fact she cited subject matter as her main consideration when approaching all assignments: “Writing the assignments was not different for me in any way except interest.”

Several students made reference to all of the assignments rather than just one. Adam mentioned that he liked working on the articles because the style that they required was interesting to him: “I enjoyed the chance to write with a creative flare. I

don't get to do that very much." Tiffany experienced more discontent than pleasure, which was obvious in her statement, "some of the assignments were boring and I wasn't passionate about them. I have to be passionate or the writing doesn't come out well." Heather also lacked optimism when it came to approaching the assignments: "Journalism isn't something you learn to like."

These comments reflect the general consensus that how well one identifies with or finds interest in the tasks associated with a course can impact what one is able to realize as a result of participation in the task. Whether or not an assignment is interesting is highly a matter of the individual's choice. One assignment will not attract all the students in the same one. Thus, one must consider the degree of interest with an assignment or the subject matter of the class (high to low) in order to predict how individuals might experience change.

*Perceptions of the professor.* This variable is an interesting one because it deals with the students' perceptions of the professor's credibility or his or her willingness to support their learning. Students who made reference to this variable often stated that the way the professor behaved affected what they were able to learn from the professor. As an example, Maria stated, "The class hasn't been as big of a deal as people hype it up to be. It isn't that bad. I had heard [Paula] was the devil. She is rigid, but that's good. She cares about the work." Likewise, Gabrielle had heard the professor was hard so she was "pleasantly surprised" with her grades. She still felt that Paula was "critical of my work," but "she allows me to write in my own voice, which is refreshing." Amata was unaffected by what she had heard others say about the professor because she had taken a course from the professor before, so she was "used to her classes," and thus her learning was not compromised.

Student perceptions of the professor also influenced how they felt about their learning, as shown in the following student quotes:

"[Paula] is demanding so getting a good grade means you did a good job. It's an incentive" (Juanita).

“I am not as sure about my standing in the class because [Paula] is a tough grader. She is a good teacher though. She makes you think about what you are learning and doesn’t make it so dry” (Stacy).

“[Paula] helps train people well and that makes you think ‘I can do this’” (Adam).

Each of these examples depicts how student perceptions of the professor can influence their ability to change. It is as if students must assess how they feel about the person who is making recommendations for how they can improve. Assumingly, they must believe he or she is credible, fair, and knowledgeable or they will not internalize what is being said.

*Experience/ability.* As the name of this variable indicates, the students who made reference to this category were talking about the writing experience they brought with them to the course. Students, such as Mora, Gabrielle, and Tiffany, said they had worked to produce similar texts in the past and this exposure made writing for the class easier. Often, the language used alluded to the skills they felt they had, although ability is a concept used about the students by the professor more often than by the students. For the students, it seemed there was an almost unspoken rule about not mentioning the level of one’s particular talents for fear of coming across as too conceited. Some students, however, did make reference to the skills they did or did not possess. One final group of students also talked about the lack of experience or exposure to a style of writing as a positive attribute because it could make writing fresh and exciting. Each of these groups brings an interesting take on the experience of the class, as depicted below.

In the first group, students talk as if the more experience they have, the better off they will be in the class. Pam mentioned her expertise as if it could prepare her for anything: “I am a student of writing so I am used to writing and am comfortable with the writing process.” Stacy elaborated on this point: “I haven’t had a hard time learning because we are prepared up to this point in the program.” Pablo expressed similar sentiments, but he specifically mentioned magazine writing: “I’ve done some

journalism stuff before and that background knowledge helped a lot in this class.”

Adam was almost afraid that his experience would hinder him because of the confidence it would give him: “I am proud of myself for not being cocky because I have done these things before. I am trying to stay open.”

Incidentally, Adam’s comment is one of the only student references to ability. As previously mentioned, the professor tended to refer to the “strength of the writers in the class” (first interview), and students would talk about the ability of others (Justin—“I am not *that* good yet”), but students rarely talked about their own proficiencies.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, inexperience was often viewed as an obstacle to overcome. Justin and Heather each made comments similar to Dolores’s: “I have struggled a bit with my process because this is a different kind of writing than I am used to.” In Laura’s case, her lack of familiarity affected her efficacy. She generally viewed herself as a novice who had much work to do. She stated, “Everything is a struggle because it is a new way of writing. I enjoy it but I’m in a transition.” Other students stated matter-of-factly that inexperience was an issue for them. “This is a different style than I am used to” (Jane) was a fairly common comment. Jan made specific reference to her knowledge base for the course or lack thereof. “It is hard to step into a class without the prerequisites.”

The final group of students looked favorably on inexperience because they viewed it as a catalyst for new opportunities. Gabrielle remarked that a new experience makes an assignment enjoyable: “The third article was my favorite because it was different from anything I had done before. I had done reviews before but not of a band, bar, or restaurant. It was cool.” Juanita agreed by saying that “totally new” writing “teaches you what you don’t know.” She went on to say, “I am used to what needs to happen in order to write these papers, but I am enjoying them because they are different.” Similarly, Adam stated, “I am looking forward to the profile because I haven’t had a chance to write a big profile yet. I want that experience.”

Each of these examples depicts the variable experience/ability as a continuum between less and more. In some cases, less is preferable. In other cases, students desire more. Either scenario again shows the importance of understanding the particular experience of individuals in order to process their ability to change.

*Writing self-efficacy.* During the discussion of the outcome variable of confidence, I mentioned that how one feels about one's writing could be both a contributor to change and an effect. Certainly, how one feels towards one's ability to write would affect one's willingness to approach a writing task. Also, the successes or failures one experiences would then impact how willing one might be to approach future tasks. Thus, these similar variables appear at both ends of the model.

As a possible agent of change, writing self-efficacy refers to a student's belief in his or her writing ability. Students with higher degrees of self-efficacy seemed to exude a confidence that determined how open they were to possible change. Those with lower degrees seemed to use this variable as an explanation for why they might not be performing in the ways they had hoped for. As in the previous variable, the students seemed divided into two camps, those with strong perceptions of self-efficacy and those without, although the students would appear on a continuum rather than as extremes.

Gabrielle and Jan both appear in the camp with higher degrees of self-efficacy. Their placement in this category came not from what they said but from how they acted. These students seemed to act as if they could accomplish any writing task if given the proper amount of time and resources. They also both performed well in the class. Other students in this camp actually stated directly their confidence in their writing. Juanita said, "I am more comfortable with this kind of writing, but I'm a different writer than I was when I first did this." Her ease with the genre seemed related to her perceptions of her development. These efficacious views appeared almost as an explanation for why she was able to experience change. Similarly, Maria said, "The class hasn't been too tough for me because I have an ability to adapt my writing style." While this comment references *experience/ability*, she would not have

been able to make the statement without confidence in her beliefs about her writing. Adam's comment is perhaps the most interesting: "I don't write to find out about myself. I write because I am good at it. I'm not a typical writing major." He directly states how he feels about his skills.

In the other camp, students, who might and often did have excellent writing abilities, had less faith in their abilities. Dolores stated, "I am a good creative writer," but this was in response to why she felt she did not do as she expected on one article. It is as if she can only be good at one aspect of writing, so her view of herself served as a valid explanation. Jane showed a lack of faith in her writing as she talked about her desire to pursue magazine writing on her own: "I don't have much confidence but I feel well-prepared." Despite the preparation, she said she would not pursue magazine writing until she could compete "on a bigger scale." Laura summarized the sentiments of this group when she remarked, "I feel like I am learning a lot, but it hasn't settled in yet. I'm still putting the pieces together."

Thus, this variable indicates that the degree of confidence in one's ability, otherwise known as writing self-efficacy, plays a part in determining how susceptible students are to change, especially when paired with motivation/incentives. The degree to which students believed in themselves seemed to influence how willing students were to approach the kind of situations that would help them grow and develop.

*Practice.* Both students and the professor stressed the need to practice one's skills in order to help develop those skills (concepts, et.). In fact, the classroom is based on the need for practice: students participate in assignments to help them better understand the kind of work they will be doing once the class is over. It is not surprising, then, that students mentioned the influence of practice during their interviews. The general consensus seemed to be "how much effort you put into something and what you make of it determine how much you learn from writing" (Gabrielle) or "learning writing is doing it" (Gabrielle). The more students practiced, the easier the writing seemed to become. Each of the following quotes express this belief.



“The writing is coming easier for me now because I feel like I have the basics down from much practicing” (Mora).

“I’ve learned more each time I’ve written, so that’s a natural progression, from small to big” (Tiffany).

“The process [of writing] is easier because I have gotten into the mode of writing” (Juanita).

Thus, this variable seems to indicate that the amount of practice one endures can impact one’s ability to change. The more one practices, the more one has the opportunity to improve. The kind of practice did not seem to be a factor, just the degree to which one practices.

### ***Section Summary***

The second of two groups of necessary conditions for change in students during a semester, *individually-based conditions* represent factors associated with the individual learner. Within this category of conditions, the degree of *motivation/incentives* inherent within students or the assignment, students’ *interest* in the course or the material, their *perceptions of the professor* as an expert or as support, the amount and type of *experience/ability* students possess, the amount of *writing self-efficacy* they have, and the amount of *practice* they engage are all potentially responsible for change. Yet, it was often the relationship among the conditions that accounted for the change. Thus, the nature of these relationships will be explored in the next section.

### **Interaction Among Conditions**

As one might imagine, it is difficult to discuss these variables without discussing the interaction among them. Each had the potential to contribute to another. Some conditions were relevant for certain students, but were inconsequential for others. Other conditions only became influential for change in students because of their relationship with another condition (i.e., a student’s belief in her ability, or writing self-efficacy, affects her perceptions of her experience/ability). Additionally, just because students experienced the same condition did not mean they would experience

it in the same way or to the same degree. Therefore, one must understand how the conditions worked together to produce change because the participants often identified the mutual influence of several conditions when giving credit for improvement rather than just one. For example, Paula named a number of conditions when discussing why she felt the students had produced better texts than in her previous classes: “[Students need] a lot of assignments, drafts, revisions, feedback, the possibility of getting published, so that leads to them really doing well” (final interview). In her opinion, students need the combined effects of assignments, practice, mentoring, and motivation/incentives in order to improve, not just one condition.

In her first interview, she was even more specific as to what would lead to student improvement (see Table 4.21). Again, she felt each of these conditions, which are divided between those that are her responsibility and those the students must contribute, must be in place for change to occur. The table also implicates improvement as a process rather than an easily-achieved entity because most of these variables occur over time and build upon themselves.

<b>Table 4.21: Categorized Professor Response to Believed Causes of Student Improvement (Transformation)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback (<i>Mentoring</i>)</li> <li>• Modeling (<i>Instructional Activities</i>)</li> <li>• Revision (<i>Practice</i>)</li> <li>• Student motivation (<i>Motivation/Incentives</i>)</li> <li>• Encouragement from professor (<i>Mentoring</i>)</li> <li>• Student ability to tackle something new (<i>Experience/Ability</i>)</li> <li>• Student familiarity with and ability to perform basic writing elements (<i>Experience/Ability</i>)</li> </ul>

Student responses to Questionnaire 4 depict an equally dynamic picture of the necessary elements for change (see Table 4.22, learning in the genre of magazine writing, and Table 4.23, learning about writing in general). In every instance, students

<b>Table 4.22: Student Nominations for the Factors that Benefit Learning about Magazine Writing (N=22)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Practice and revision ( <i>Practice</i> )	13
Class and/or class discussions ( <i>Instructional Activities</i> )	8
Experimentation/revision ( <i>Experience/Ability</i> )	5
Reading the works of others ( <i>Instructional Activities</i> )	5
Peer reviews and discussions ( <i>Instructional Activities</i> )	4
Professor's experiences ( <i>Perceptions of Professor</i> )	4
Guest speakers ( <i>Instructional Activities</i> )	3
Writing for real ( <i>Service-learning</i> )	3
Assignments ( <i>Assignments</i> )	2
Feedback from professor ( <i>Mentoring</i> )	2
Journaling ( <i>Reflection</i> )	2

mentioned more than one condition when identifying what helped them learn. Sometimes, the factors were dependent on each other. For example, “peer reviews and discussions” as well as “feedback from professor” would indicate to students that they needed more “practice and revision” on their “assignments.”

<b>Table 4.23: Student Nominations for the Factors that Benefit Learning about Writing in General (N=22)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Feedback ( <i>Mentoring</i> )	8
Practice ( <i>Practice</i> )	7
Other classes ( <i>Experience/Ability</i> )	5
Writing for different purposes/audiences ( <i>Service-learning, Assignments</i> )	5
Journaling ( <i>Reflection</i> )	4
Reading others' works ( <i>Instructional Activities</i> )	3
Group work ( <i>Instructional Activities</i> )	2
Prewriting ( <i>Reflection*</i> )	2
Revisions ( <i>Practice</i> )	2
* Prewriting in this instance meant the time spent thinking about and planning what would be said before sitting down to write. Based on this definition, prewriting is the equivalent of pre-reflection.	

The results of this chain reaction would then lead to perceived improvements. The necessary factors and/or their importance were different for each student, a fact that

will be more obvious during the discussion on how three students flow through the model as a whole.

In Table 4.24, the students contemplated in Questionnaire 1 what factors might contribute to one very specific kind of change, their perceptions of their writing (which could be classified as an aspect of transformation). As before, students nominated several factors that should be recognized equally. Juan provided an example of how the factors work together to influence his perceptions of his ability:

Many professors have told me that I'm a great writer. One professor in particular actually said that I was the best writer in her class. She even made me the official writing tutor. I was flattered, but my time under the spotlight was short-lived. One of my other professors said my writing was too colloquial. I wasn't sure what he meant by this. I simply nodded and accepted his criticism. Later that day, I looked up the word *colloquial* in the dictionary. The definition read: "of, relating to, or characteristic of conversation and esp. of familiar and informal conversation." I never thought of my writing as conversational. Was this a bad thing? Apparently for him it was. My essay didn't make it into the class publication, a booklet that would be displayed at a local museum. I was disappointed, yet I was glad that someone made me realize that I wasn't a professional writer. I still need much practice and all the criticism I can get.

In this text sample from Questionnaire 1, Juan mentioned or referred to several variables as reasons for feeling he was a "fairly good writer." The first was mentoring, represented in this case by feedback from professors, both positive and negative. The positive support made him believe in himself while the negative remarks made him truly question his writing style. It is interesting to see the amount of space he devoted to each example, with the negative stimulus receiving much more attention, almost as if he was wrestling with whether or not to believe what the professor had said.

This led to the second variable, perceptions of the professor. If Juan did not respect the opinions of his professors or their authority then the mentoring would

have had little to no impact on him. He had first to accept what they say about his writing as truth or he would not have been impacted by their feedback.

<b>Table 4.24: Student Nominations for the Factors that Influenced Perceptions of Their Writing (N=25)</b>	
<b><u>Category</u></b>	<b><u>Endorsements</u></b>
Training or experience ( <i>Experience/Ability</i> )	9
Interest in or the type of paper ( <i>Interest</i> )	8
Past successes ( <i>Experience/Ability</i> )	7
Professors have encouraged me ( <i>Mentoring</i> )	7
Exposure to/negative impressions of other's papers ( <i>Instructional Activities</i> )	5
Influence or feedback from others (besides professors) ( <i>Mentoring</i> )	5
Personal views of writing (it relates to me or my self-worth) ( <i>Writing self-efficacy</i> )	5
Time spent practicing ( <i>Practice</i> )	5
Preference for writing; "I could avoid speaking" ( <i>Motivation/Incentives</i> )	4
Writing ease; "Writing has always come naturally to me" ( <i>Writing self-efficacy</i> )	3
Impressions of one's writing quality ( <i>Writing self-efficacy</i> )	2
Professors have discouraged me ( <i>Mentoring</i> )	2

The next referenced variable is indirect because, while Juan mentioned the event pertaining to the variable, he did not mention it outright. He alluded to motivation/incentives when he stated that his piece did not make it into the class publication. Apparently, recognition was important to him. He remembered that he had received negative comments and that he did not get the accolades his classmates did. Thus, his "failure" to realize an important incentive influenced how he felt about his writing abilities. If it did not, he would not have mentioned it in the limited amount of space provided to him.

After internalizing the feedback and negative incentives, Juan came up with a solution for being too conversational—practice. For him, more practice might have led to the recognition he craved. He also mentioned mentoring as a possible solution;

exposure to more criticism might have led to the identification of what needed improving during practice. His probable success with this strategy in times past (experience/ability) led to its deployment during times of need. Thus, we see that many conditions worked to cause a shift in Juan's views of his writing.

In another example, Andrea, an MLA student who dropped the class after receiving an undesirable grade on the first assignment, described her reasons for feeling she was a "very good writer":

I was in honors classes at UT in undergrad. My professional life shows me that many people cannot write well at all, so I do well comparatively. I write well because I enjoy it, and I write every day. I feel good about my writing because I define myself as a writer in many ways. By that, I mean that I have the courage to express myself. Any person who writes with courage and conviction should reward himself internally. Writing is like speaking—you are putting yourself out there. It is like dancing—you express, as you are, in an authentic way, when ever [sic] you can do so. I do that, so I feel good about it.

Andrea began her defense of her writing perceptions by mentioning her "professional life" (*experience/ability*) and the lessons she learned during that time. She then discussed the skills of other writers (*experience/ability*) as a way of benchmarking her abilities against theirs. She also implicated motivation/incentives by stating that she writes "well because I enjoy it," which positively impacted her desire to "write every day" (practice). The reference to "well" as a qualifier for her writing and the use of phrases like "courage to express myself" and "I do that, so I feel good about it" allude to a moderate to high writing self-efficacy that obviously contributed to her views of her writing ability. There is also an element of reflection in this sample because she talked about the frequency with which she wrote and how she valued writing "with courage and conviction," indicating a more personal rather than a professional relationship with writing. She also "reflected" on how her writing compared to others in an effort to process past events and experiences. Thus, the

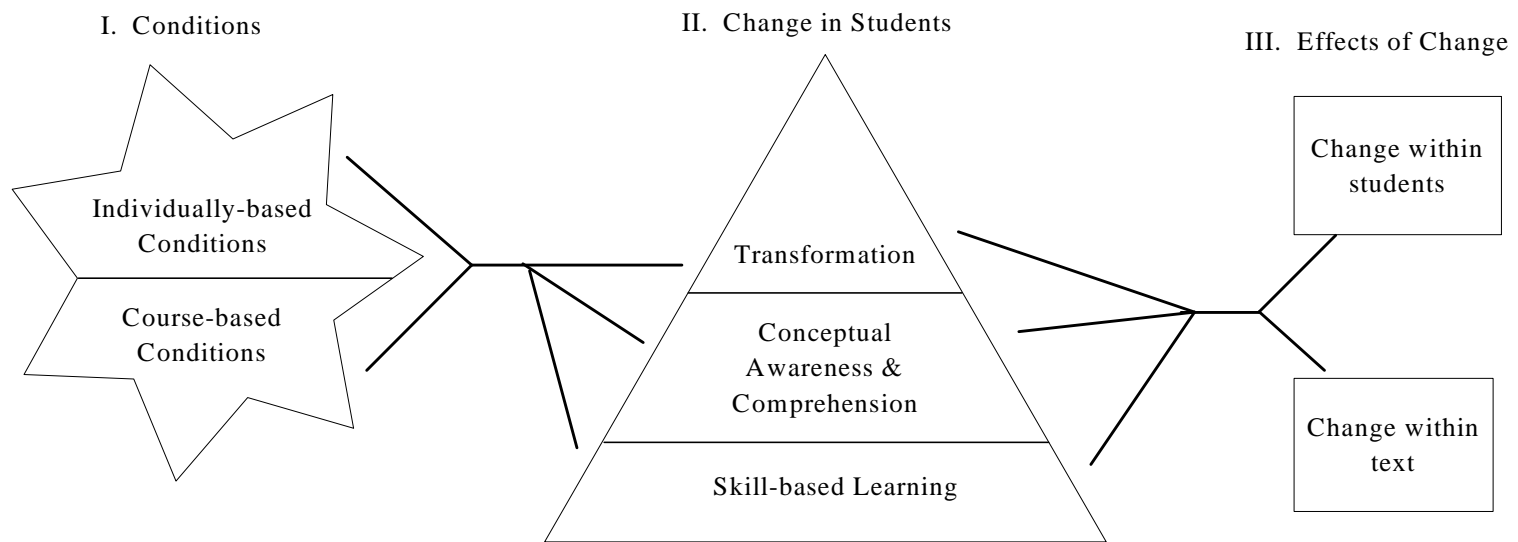
combined effect of the named conditions helped Andrea create her writing perceptions.

Both of these examples illustrate how the conditions act and react to each other. Practice influenced writing self-efficacy which influenced motivation which influenced experience/ability, etc. Only when one recognizes the involved relationships among several variables simultaneously working together to create change can one comprehend how change in students occurs.

### **The Process of Change: Understanding the Model in its Entirety**

Up to this point, the discussion defined and explained each piece of the model. However, one cannot fully understand what it means to produce change in students without seeing how individual students might experience the model in its entirety (see Figure 4.7). After all, the model does not work the same way for every student. The conditions change, students will experience different kinds of change, and they will have different effects based on the change. The process captured by the model is fluid to allow for these differences. Even the variables interact differently for each individual.

To illustrate how students move through the process that is the model, the next and final portion of this chapter will present three cases of students. I selected students for this examination on the basis of achievement and ranked achievement because these variables represent standard ways of measuring success in a course—grades. The students' grades were also the means by which Paula measured success. The first case depicts a student, Jane, who was able to realize positive change as measured by the achievement and ranked achievement variable (see Table 4.11). Her grades, scores, and ranks increased with each assignment. The next case, Andres, is a student whose achievement and ranked achievement did not change throughout the semester (his grades stayed the same), and the final case, Rob, is of a student who produced negative achievement according to his grades, scores, and rank (they



**Figure 4.7: Detailed Version of the Model of Change in Students During a Semester**



consistently decreased during the semester) but mixed effects of change, which leads to an important point.

I want to proceed cautiously into this discussion because it is too simplistic to think that a student's final grade and rank truly reflect all that the student learned or did not learn in the class. As the model illustrates, change in students can occur in more than one way. The effects of change students realized within themselves also plays a factor in determining what students were able to take away from a class. For this reason, the following discussion will focus on all elements of change a student experienced, meaning that even the student whose textual scores decreased can realize positive effects and vice versa and thereby creating a more inclusive picture. Whether or not the student showed evidence of transformation and the factors contributing to the change will also be discussed. It is also important to acknowledge that, although the semester began with 25 students, it ended with 21. So what happened to the four students who dropped the course? Because they did not complete the course, it is difficult to measure whether or not these students experienced change during the semester. Only one student, Ryan, turned in more than one assignment and the last one he completed was not a true measure of his ability because, as he was writing the article, he started showing the signs of the illness that would eventually force him to drop the class. Thus, the students dropped out of the model in the conditions phase because some factor(s) inhibited them from experiencing change.

For Ryan and for Amy, who could not complete the course due to her new groom's struggles with heroin addiction and recovery, there did not seem to be enough motivation/incentives to compensate for the extenuating circumstances they faced. Both indicated to Paula that they wanted to stay in the class because "I actually enjoyed the class and felt my writing had improved" (Ryan, email to the professor), but they could not overcome their unfortunate situations.

Andrea and Edita also fell out of the model at the motivation/incentives condition, but for different reasons. It seems that Andrea did not like the scores she received on

the first article, so she dropped the course, stating: “I do not think that journalism is the route for me at this time” (email to the professor). Edita’s case is more of a mystery because she simply stopped turning in assignments and coming to class. Paula indicated that Edita did not like the course’s material (lack of motivation or incentive to continue), but she was not entirely certain about Edita’s withdrawal. And because Paula did not share records on the students who dropped the course, it is difficult to know how any of these students performed before they left the class.

But these students are not as interesting as those who did complete the class and whose journey the model describes, namely Jane, Andres, and Rob. One note before continuing: the quotes from emails, interviews, questionnaires, journals, and textual samples cited here are reproduced exactly as they were printed. I made no attempts to correct grammar or other issues out of concern that changes might alter the voice of the students.

### ***Jane: A Story of Positive Change***

Jane was a junior who transferred to the university from another Texas university at the beginning of the year because “I didn’t fit in there” (interview). During the time of the study in what would be her second semester at the University, she was still trying to decide if she had made the right decision. (In the end, she decided that she had not.) She described herself as someone who loves to read and write. “In my spare time I fight for freedom and the ever-diminishing North American polar-bear population. Since I have been busy with school these past few years, however, instead of going out in a patriotic leotard and exercising my super-human strength and genius in the name of truth, love, creativity, and faux fur, my contributions have been limited to local acts of greatness” (introduction paper). As the quote indicates, Jane was a clever, passionate, and creative young woman who had no problem revealing information about herself or reaching out to others. Unlike some students who took the course as a requirement, Jane enrolled because she thought it would be “useful and interesting” (Q1). Her goals for the course were: “To learn to write interesting and effective magazine articles, to not dread interviews and research, and to basically

understand how the process works” (introduction paper). An English Literature major with a minor in Communications, Jane’s career goals were lofty and optimistic:

“Career” is such a scary word. It’s so (in?)definite. I someday would like to write fiction that is excellent. I want to inspire others and make them think, to influence the world and the future...However, my ultimate goal and desire is to write and be a master, a member of the elite, one of the remembered few that impacted the world and history. (Not ambitious at all, right?) (introduction paper).

Despite her confidence in herself, she lacked confidence in certain aspects of her writing. When asked in Questionnaire 1 to describe her writing or her writing ability, she stated:

My writing in its current state, I think, has a lot of potential, but I still have a lot of learning to do...I am capable of writing a competent essay with a thesis and support, but I by no means am excellent at it. I still make grammatical mistakes and my biggest problem is fully developing ideas. I think that is partially caused by not spending enough time on them (writing outlines, proof-reading, etc.) and because in general, I’m still learning.

She went on to describe why she held these beliefs of her writing: “I feel that I have potential with my writing because I enjoy writing, feel satisfaction with it, and have received positive feedback from others about it...While I usually make A’s on my papers, they are usually low A’s, with *many* comments on how to improve the paper on them. Also, I am very conscious of the difference in skill and style between a published writer’s works and my own.” Because she enjoyed writing, she found the task of sitting down to write “fun and challenging.” Once the piece was completed, “I’m both proud and nervous, because I usually don’t ever think that I’m ‘done’” (Q1). So Jane enjoyed the writing process, but she became attached to her work and sought perfection in her text.

In terms of her perceived writing strengths and weaknesses, she liked to “come up with ideas” and she was “always learning and exposing myself to new techniques.”

However, “my weaknesses are following through and applying myself to writing that is not easy or interesting...I’m also not always brave or humble enough to ask for help and I slack on proof reading” (introduction paper).

This brief synopsis from Jane’s perceptions of herself, or at least those she would share with relative strangers at that point in the semester, depicts a playful, confident in some aspects, enthusiastic, and dedicated learner who loved to write. Over the course of the semester, I had the chance to get to know her even better because she always sought the assistance of either Paula or myself and often both of us before the due date of the rough and final drafts for each article. Throughout the semester, I found her portrayal of herself to be true, but I also came to feel that she was more insecure than she originally confessed to being. At one point Paula became so concerned with the number of revised drafts she was submitting to us before each article that she recommended we should stop helping her for fear of making her too dependent on feedback. Admittedly, Jane liked professors who “don’t make the student feel guilty or incompetent for repeatedly asking for help” (introduction paper), but Jane’s asking made one contemplate the line between when assistance is helpful and when it becomes detrimental.

Each of these clues to Jane as a person provides information into the conditions that would lead to the positive change she experienced during the semester as determined by the effects she produced in the variables of *achievement* and *ranked achievement*. In terms of achievement, Jane realized steady improvements with each grade from Paula and the scores from the judges (see Table 4.25), which is no surprise considering her placement into the category of “positive change.” The only exception to this is the second article because the copy of the paper Paula received was missing the back page, so she gave Jane a low grade for an incomplete performance. Had the paper been complete, as it was for the two judges, she would have received a higher grade.

Jane also improved her ranked achievement scores as evidenced by her increasing ranked score (see Table 4.26), a mark that distinguished her from other students in the

class with similar scores. The judges' rank score of 2 indicated that she had been able to produce the second best article in the class by the fourth article. Their score sheet comments exemplified the progression she made from "disconnected in places and

<b>Table 4.25: Achievement Results for Jane</b>			
<b>Article Number</b>	<b>Paula's Grade</b>	<b>Judge 1's Score</b>	<b>Judge 2's Score</b>
1	85	4	4
2	70*	5	5
3	89	6	6
4	94	6	6
* The version of Article 2 that Jane turned in to Paula was incomplete unlike the version the judges received.			

missing important magazine writing features such as angle" on the first article to "really well-written" on the final article.

<b>Table 4.26: Ranked Achievement Results for Jane</b>		
<b>Article Number</b>	<b>Paula's Rank</b>	<b>Judge's Rank</b>
1	16	24
2	20*	9
3	9	4
4	9	2
* Paula's version of Article 2 was incomplete.		

*The conditions.* Several conditions seemed to lead to this change, although some were more prevalent than others. And again, it was difficult to isolate any one variable as contributing to change because of their reciprocal interaction. (For a visual representation of the relationship between conditions, see Figure 4.8. This and the following figures are all subsets of the model in its entirety, Figure 4.7, in that the depiction of the conditions and their ensuing relationships represent the *conditions* as they would appear in Part I of the model. The boxes to which the conditions lead represent Part II and Part III, namely the *change in students* as depicted by the *effects*

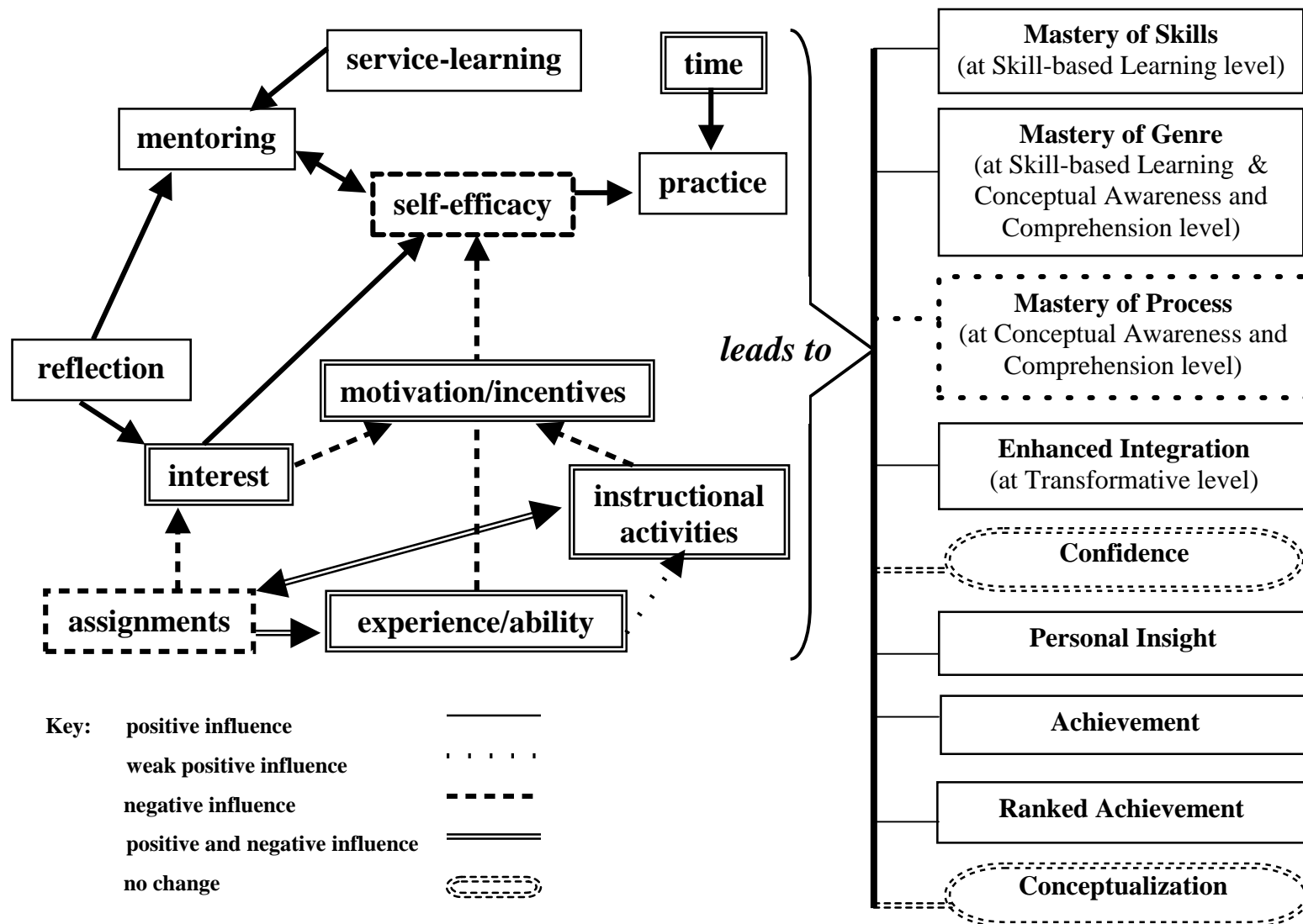


Figure 4.8: Model of Change within Jane

of this change. In reading Figure 4.8 and the subsequent figures, one must note that the boxes around the *conditions* indicate the kind of influence they have on the production of the effects: positive, negative, weak positive, or both positive and negative. The boxes around the *effects* produced by the conditions denote the kind of change a student experienced: positive, negative, weak positive, or no change.) Even Jane mentioned the multiple influences she experienced in the semester: “I attribute assignments, rewriting, editing, peer work, teacher comments, reading, and the speakers to helping me change” (Q4). Because of the relationship between conditions, the following discussion for each student example will have some overlap, with certain variables being discussed within the context of others and then discussed again on their own.

One of the most salient conditions for Jane was *interest*. She often made comments such as: “When I’m interested in something, I’ll probably succeed...if I’m uninterested, I JUST DON’T WANT TO DO IT! It can be so painful!” (introduction paper). After experiencing some disillusionment with magazine writing, she found a way to reinvest her enjoyment “if and when I can write about things that interest me, for specialty magazines” (J2).

When the disillusionment became more predominant, however, her lack of interest in magazine writing, and particularly the assignments, began to negatively impact her *motivation* to perform the tasks: “It is difficult to stay positive about my writing right now because I don’t write well about things that don’t interest me” (interview). She also used interest as an *incentive* to try and reconnect with the articles. When discussing why she looked forward to the fourth article in Journal Entry 9, she stated, “It’s going to be about something I find interesting: people, and it pertains to me as well, students, writers, careers in the English field, this is the best thing I could think of” (J9). However, by Questionnaire 4, these attempts to stimulate her feelings towards magazine writing had failed, which negatively impacted her *writing self-efficacy*. As she reflected on her writing at the end of the semester, she explained that her writing was more “flawed” than she had hoped: “I think I feel this

way because I have found an area where my passion doesn't move, I'm just not interested in this field."

This impact on Jane's perceptions of her own writing would have interesting repercussions because her *writing self-efficacy* was already somewhat compromised. Despite her relative successes both prior to and during the course (*experience*), Jane had low writing self-efficacy: "I think I sound fun, cute, but most of all, like an amateur" (Q1). She also stated, "I am capable of writing a competent essay with a thesis and support, but I by no means am excellent at it" (Q1). Throughout the semester, these feelings did not improve much. In her second journal entry, she talked about why she felt it was important to give magazine writers more credit than she previously had, but even this comment provoked an opportunity for her to express doubt in her abilities: "The good side of this [giving magazine writers more credit now] is I think it will be cool if and when I ever get the form down." By mid semester, she was answering questions such as "I am confident about what I have written so far this semester" (Q3) with a neutral response.

One reason for her continued reservation about her ability was because of her lack of *experience* with the *assignments* as is evident from her comments about the first article, which she found to be "pretty foreign" (J2), and the fourth article: "I know I would find myself nervously mumbling in an unprofessional manner at the interviewee and turning bright red because I do these sorts of things. It's like stage fright. I can control it when I'm confident and prepared, but usually that comes after several humbling mistakes" (J7). Her inexperience made the task of writing difficult. By her final interview, she indicated that writing was becoming easier because she had the opportunity to gain more experience and to develop an understanding for how to write for magazines professionally, but she still did not have the confidence "to just go out there and do it. I have too much to learn." When asked why she did not feel prepared, she stated, "This is a different style than I am used to." So for Jane, her inexperience negatively affected her writing self-efficacy.



Despite her low perceptions of her actual ability, she seemed to remain positive about her potential. In her interview, she talked about how much she had learned and that her grades reflected this learning, but that she still had “more learning to do.” On Questionnaire 1, she further explained, “I feel that I have potential with my writing because I enjoy writing, feel satisfaction with it, and have received positive feedback from others about it.” Here again she mentioned the impact of *interest* and now *mentoring* on her writing self-efficacy. Both conditions seemed to have positive effects when she enjoyed what she was writing. Additionally, her perceptions of what she felt she had learned (*experience*) positively impacted her views of her “potential,” but negatively impacted her efficacy when she felt she was too inexperienced to accomplish the task. In turn, writing self-efficacy impacted how often she sought *mentoring* and *practice*, with lower efficacy levels leading to greater needs of these conditions (discussed later). It also acted as a negative stimulus for *motivation/incentives* because lower levels of efficacy made her less motivated towards certain activities.

The impact on *motivation/incentives* would become important for Jane because of her need to be “willing” in order to experience learning: “I can’t do that [improve] without accepting first the stuff that needs to be improved” (Q1). Her willingness also applied to her ability to experience transformation, which she felt was caused by “a willingness and opportunity to learn” (Q2). Towards the end of the semester, it was clear that her lack of *interest* in the material was acting negatively towards her motivation and the *assignments*. In Journal Entry 9, she talked about her feelings toward interviewing her alumni for the last article: “God forbid I ever approach anything with a positive attitude.” The disinterest began to affect her enjoyment of magazine writing in general: “With this stuff, I just couldn’t get motivated” (Q4).

One of Jane’s strategies for compensating for low motivation was to invest in what she believed to be the incentives of certain projects: “I’d like to overcome the stupidity that I feel the form sometimes gives the writer, to have something brief and vivid, but dense and deep. I don’t want to write just pop phrases. I want to have

something to say” (J9). Her desire to be remembered as a great writer gave her an *incentive* that often helped her overcome the lack of interest in the genre.

She also enjoyed the *incentives* associated with *service-learning*. The context of service-learning meant that more than just the professor and the students would see her work, and given her insatiable need for feedback (see *mentoring*), the demands created by the real world setting added some extra pressure: “There is more pressure when you must write for an editor rather than a school assignment” (interview). For Jane, the pressure became a motivating factor: “I found that the pressure, though intimidating, did inspire me to learn and work harder” (Q4). Service-learning also provided a safe haven for her to practice future skills in a realistic environment: “I would much rather do my first interview for this class, where I can get feedback and have the excuse that it’s a grade, than just jump into the world of writing and find myself freaking out because I don’t know how to organize an interview, what to ask” (Q4).

Despite these perks, Jane also expressed some uncertainty towards the concept of service-learning. In Questionnaire 2, she answered the question, “I think service-learning will be beneficial for me,” with only a moderately favorable endorsement. And on Questionnaire 1, the concept almost became a negative incentive: “Instead of just attempting to make the grade, we are actually competing with each other to get an article published. It’s kind of scary.” However, her overall impression of service-learning was as a positive force on her *motivation* despite its unfavorable influence on her *writing self-efficacy*: “I suppose my impression of service-learning classes is a little mixed: I think they are a good idea, but hard to balance out because the focus is shifted from making sure the student is prepared and knows what’s going on to letting them learn on their own by doing it. It’s a good concept, and I know I’ve learned a lot, but I haven’t felt very comfortable with it” (Q4). Thus, although the realistic conditions created by service-learning made Jane uncomfortable at times, she was able to see this variable as a positive incentive for taking the articles seriously because it provided her with what she craved most, beneficial feedback.

Not all of the incentives Jane mentioned were positive in her mind. When talking about why she did not like the first article, she said, “I don’t like to gear my stories to someone’s requests” (J9). She also found exposure to the works of others, especially former students who had completed similar assignments (*instructional activities*), to be a negative influence on her motivation to do well on certain articles: “I’ve been really turned off lately by all of the rushed and shoddy quality I’ve been reading in magazines, and also that I tend to emulate. I don’t want to, but I feel like writers seem to be getting away with bad work, so why should I try harder?” (J6). Again in Journal Entry 8, she stated, “Perhaps it was from seeing some really bad articles on line, or just my laziness, but I got the impression that I didn’t really have to put in the effort with that one...Why should I try hard when they [previous authors] didn’t?”

From this condition, we can see that motivation/incentives played a big role in determining how well Jane would be able to experience change. The variable served almost a causal relationship for her because she stated that “willingness” was a necessary condition for her improvement. However, *interest* strongly influenced her willingness because she found she did not enjoy what she was writing. The supplementary readings (*instructional activities*) also negatively impacted her motivation because she viewed the standards for writing so poorly that she felt she did not need to try as hard. She was able to compensate for any negative stimuli, however, by recognizing the incentives, mostly within the context created by service-learning: safe ground for practice, realistic conditions, and feedback from important people (*mentoring*). Each of these considerations acted as motivation for her to reinvest value in the kind of output she was producing. Thus, she was able to “compete” at a level that would enable her to realize positive textual change.

An inherent component of service-learning, *reflection* was also a pertinent condition for Jane. She strongly felt that most questions dealing with the benefits of reflection in Questionnaire 2 (The process of reflection or “thinking about something you have done,” is beneficial for me personally; The act of writing is beneficial to me or my “personal growth/understanding;” I see writing as an agent of change; I think

writing about my writing will help me “understand” or “grow;” I think writing about my writing will help me “reconsider previous knowledge, beliefs or feelings”) reflected sentiments that were true of her with the exception of two. For “I think writing about my writing will ‘produce new insight,’ ‘open my eyes,’ or make me ‘aware of differences,’” she only moderately felt it was true of her, and “I think writing about my writing will help me ‘improve as a person’ or achieve ‘positive personal improvement’” produced a neutral response. The difference between these questions seems to be how she might be interpreting “personal benefits.” If general personal benefits are expressed, she agreed with the comments. However, when the personal is described to be something relating to her “improvement as a person” or possible enlightenment, she was not as certain. Therefore, it seemed that reflection helped her deal with what she experienced in the classroom.

In her interview, she confirmed this suspicion by indicating that she liked to journal because “I get to talk about what I don’t like and what I think is stupid. It makes me feel better and helps me feel that someone is listening to me and understands what I am going through.” And in Questionnaire 3, she stated that “talking about the process” helped her learn about magazine writing. So Jane seemed to use *reflection* as a means for helping her understand what was going on in class, reconnect with the material she was interested in (or at least vent about what she thought was “stupid”), and reach out for the mentoring that she found so useful. In her words, “I often evaluated my writing experiences previous to this class and assignments in this class, looked at what I learned, what I enjoyed, and what I struggled with. It helped me develop a sense of what I wanted to do with the paper I was currently working on, and what I was interested in writing professionally” (Q4). Thus, the fact that she used reflection and the degree to which she used the reflection (frequency=“often”) had a positive influence on her *interest* with the subject, the need to be *mentored*, and the change she was able to experience.

Although not a direct influence, reflection enabled Jane to process how she felt about the *assignments*, which were both beneficial for her and a source of contention.

She viewed the class as useful because it was so applied and because certain aspects of the assignments sparked her *interest*: “I am really trying hard with this one [Article 3], and I’m enjoying it. I like the fact that I can, for the most part, take myself out of this article” (J8). However, she was not fond of most of the assignments:

I’m kind of turned off by the assignments we have done. Perhaps not the assignments, the magazines we’ve written for, or how I’ve approached it. The [second article], for instance, completely turned me off. Personal essays don’t really bother me, but I don’t think that the topic specifically was for me—what makes my time here at [the university] special. I’m not staying after this semester, so I was definitely not the voice alumni want to hear. (J8)

Later in the same journal entry she explained why she did not like the second article: “That article [Article 2] was a very humbling experience for me, forcing me to realize that I *am* going to have to put effort into even the dumbest assignment” (J8).

Thus, the assignments negatively influenced her interest, which negatively affected her willingness to perform a task. However, aspects of the assignments could positively impact her motivation as well as is evident by her feelings towards the last assignment: “I’m really looking forward now to asking this guy more questions, and figuring out what to present the audience. I guess I find this positive reaction or interest surprising, but relieving. I haven’t been too geared up for anything this semester, and I like looking forward to what I do” (J9). She seemed to enjoy the applied nature of the assignments, but she did not enjoy the assignments themselves. Therefore, assignments could be both a negative and a positive influence on her motivation.

As previously indicated, *mentoring* was another important condition for Jane because she seemed to rely heavily on feedback from others, especially the professor’s. Throughout the semester, she sent multiple drafts to Paula and to me for revision comments. Apparently, this technique was a strategy she often employed: “I’ve had several teachers that worked with me extensively on improving certain papers, and allowed me to show them ahead of the due date, and it was very helpful. I

learned a lot from them about what I was doing wrong in general, not just on those papers” (introduction paper). In Questionnaire 2, she directly implicated “feedback” as one of the factors that helped her improve her writing.

Despite the benefits of mentoring for her personally, Jane was not always confident about the kind of feedback she received. While she valued the outcome of feedback, it often caused her some discomfort when she submitted her work for scrutiny: “I get scared about what people will think, but I still submit my work for comments to peers and other writers” (Q1). Yet her concerns did not prohibit her from seeking feedback from others. Her low *writing self-efficacy* seemed to generate a greater need for mentoring than other students might have as it helped her become more confident in her work. Feedback allowed her to identify the necessary changes she needed to make to the text before submitting a final draft. Working with her so extensively allowed me to surmise that she seemed to feel unable to make the proper textual improvements on her own. Mentoring was one of her answers to this problem.

The other condition Jane used to compensate for her low writing self-efficacy was *practice*, a factor she directly named as one that contributed to her writing improvement (Q2). Like feedback, practice allowed her to make multiple textual revisions and to perfect her articles until she felt comfortable with the outcome because “I require a lot of drafts before I feel like I’m done” (Q1). Her low *writing self-efficacy* seemed to translate into high amounts of practice in order for her to experience change; the more practice she endured, the better she felt about her work.

*Time*, a condition related to practice, also influenced Jane’s ability to change. The more time she had, the more opportunity she had to practice and the better she seemed to feel towards the final text: “I usually try not to procrastinate, so that I have plenty of time to reluctantly, grudgingly go over my essays” (Q1). Time also represented a factor she had to overcome in order to realize her intent for the text: “I expect that I will probably not give myself enough time to write the way I know I can” (J7). For Jane, time equaled the opportunity to improve.

The final condition Jane identified on the second questionnaire as a contributing factor to her improvement was *instructional activities*, or more specifically, supplementary readings, which she referred to as “reading more of those we want to imitate.” Reading sample articles from the course required reading list seemed to help her make inferences about her own writing: “Perhaps it is just the nature of the material covered, but this [one article] really made me think about people and reality, surfaces, what we know about others and ourselves, and society” (J6). The articles also made her reflect on the writing process: “[The article] felt like a really smooth piece that incorporated information so well that it took me a minute to think about how much research must have gone into it” (J6). Jane used the readings as a means for learning about her own writing and as samples she attempted to emulate.

In addition to supplementary readings, Jane also seemed to benefit from the guest lecturers: “[The first guest speaker] was interesting and I took away quite a bit about the writing process and how she deals with editors and how she writes very few query letters. I am definitely going to put this stuff to use” (J5). Although not as influential as the readings, Jane certainly seemed to benefit from this activity.

In terms of the contribution of this condition to Jane’s potential change, *instructional activities* seemed influenced by *experience/ability*, which was dictated by the kind of *assignments* used in the class (among other things), in that her inexperience made her seek out the supplementary readings that her classmates often ignored. How often or how much she read was, therefore, a result of her perceptions of her ability, but this relationship seems to be weak. It also seemed that instructional activities negatively influenced her *motivation* to produce quality work because she modeled her work after her impressions of the samples she read from previous students. However, the more she read from writers other than her peers, the more exposure she had to good examples of magazine writing, and this seemed to positively influence her potential for change.

*Effects.* Because of these conditions, Jane was able to experience many effects of change, in addition to her positive improvements in *achievement* and *ranked*

*achievement* (see Figure 4.8 for a visual representation). Through an exploration of the effects she realized, we are permitted a glimpse the levels of change she experienced during the semester as one is a reflection of the other.

At the bottom of the hierarchical model of Change in Students, lies Skill-based Learning, which corresponds with the first effect, *mastery of skills*. Jane's change in this area seemed positive: "I have been able to get started and portray ideas in a more developed voice and style, to write more effectively and clearly" (Q4). In some instances, she was able to make simple realizations: "I was surprised how easy it was to interview him [the interviewee]" (J9). Other outcomes were more profound in their application: "I know I have difficulty staying within a word frame, so if you write fast and get all the core information down first, perhaps it's easier to fill in with more detail than it is to cut down on words" (J5). She reportedly learned how to perform core concepts inherent within magazine writing.

Some of what Jane learned helped her identify future areas of skill-based improvement: "I still don't know what I need to say in these things [the articles]" (Q4). Before approaching the last article, she admitted, "I am nervous about what questions I will ask and how to organize the interview. It doesn't matter how many [profiles] I've read, writing one, I think, will be extremely challenging. How do you make something like this flow? And what on earth am I going to ask him about?" (J7). She continued to ask the kind of questions ("How long does this thing need to be?," J9) that enabled her to process the basic mechanical issues facing her before each article. The learning she would then acquire during the writing of the articles would help her resolve the issues for future contexts.

She was also able to resolve some questions about *mastery of genre* at both the Skill-based and Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension Levels: "All I had to do was figure out what I wanted to write about and how to adapt it for the magazine, and spruce it up so it sounded good, caught attention, held it, tied in with the commitment statement, and closed tightly" (J4). When referring to the checklist of requirements she accomplished, she addressed her mastery over a basic set of skills, but her ability



to “spruce it up” represented a more conceptual understanding of the genre of magazine writing.

Sometimes her reported learning was less specific and seemed to apply to both skills and concepts: “I have learned that this [magazine writing] is more difficult than I thought it would be. Not to say it’s hard, it’s not easy either though” (J8). Yet despite her misconception, “I feel that I have learned a good basic foundation for magazine writing, what is expected, query letters (which I had no clue about), and how to approach certain assignments and what not” (J8).

Most of what Jane learned in terms of *mastery of genre*, however, showed the changes she made at the Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension Level: “I also learned how an effective piece should sound: vivid scenes, strong narrative voice, but doesn’t get in the way of the story itself, the clenching tight end, but it doesn’t have to be something stupid” (J6). The adjectives used here indicate that she understood not just how to write an ending, but how to really reach out to the audience. She also described more general conceptual benefits: “I learned quite a bit, and I think the entire class was beneficial to my understanding of this competitive field, research, and magazine writing in general.” The effects even translated into a greater appreciation for those who regularly write in the field: “This form takes a lot more work than I originally assumed, and I’m giving magazine-writers more credit now” (J2).

One way Jane was able to demonstrate her positive change in the mastery of genre was when she had to apply what she learned by critiquing the works of others. She was able to identify what professional writers did well—“He uses scenes instead of broad generalizations. It’s an approach that attracts the reader and sticks”—and what they did poorly—“The lead into the article doesn’t really stand out...there is almost no ‘showing’ at all. She doesn’t just sum up her ideas in her conclusion, but repeats her point...That would be okay, I think, in a longer article, but in one this brief, it sounds like she had a poor editor” (J3). These nice points would not be possible without an increased understanding of the magazine writing genre.

In addition to that which she has already accomplished at the Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension Level, Jane also exhibited positive outcomes in the area of *mastery of process*. Jane was candid with her struggles to begin a piece: “I guess I don’t know where to begin” (J9); “I found the same problems in the papers as far as getting started goes” (Q4); “I struggle with the beginning” (Q4); and “I’m having a hard time applying myself with this [Article 2], partially because I’m not sure how I should set it up” (J4). In all, however, she felt, “I’m learning a lot about how to approach this process” (J9). Thus, she seemed to learn enough to be able to complete each assignment, but she may not have had enough of a breakthrough to make the process easier.

One of the greatest effects of change Jane was able to realize during the semester occurred in the area of *enhanced integration*, which corresponds with the Transformative level due to its tendency to illustrate improved global application and heightened conceptual realizations. Jane described learning that extended beyond the text into a greater sense of self and one’s place in society: “Perhaps it is just the nature of the material covered, but this really made me think about people and reality, surfaces, what we know about others and ourselves, and society” (J6). She was also able to apply these realizations to her own writing: “The lead into an interview piece is not about the writer. It’s a lead into a piece about someone else, so as a writer I need to avoid making it about *me*. Profiles are about people, the readers want to hear them speak and it is the writer’s job to convey who they are” (J6). She made similar applications in Journal Entry 9: “I am learning how difficult it is to take information that someone has given you about themselves and to put it on paper, fit it into a word count, and have the same person. I feel like I am reducing [the interviewee] to 800 words about his views on teaching, and I know there is much more there.”

Jane also described how her writing appeared as a result of these higher-order learning experiences. In Questionnaire 4, she stated that she had developed “a sense of what I wanted to do with the paper I was currently working on.” She went on to say, “I found that my voice and style are similar, but that it is more mature in the last

paper” (Q4). She was even more explicit about how her writing showed evidence of transformation in her responses to some follow-up questions in her journal: “It [my writing] looks more intelligible, more creative, more like I know what I’m doing, than like a kid just rambling on with a typewriter.” Each of these cited changes showed something more profound than simple improvements—they embodied a greater understanding of what it means to be a successful writer.

As with previous variables, she also raised some questions that pertain to this level. She asked in Journal Entry 9, “What is an appropriate amount of questions to ask before you get on someone’s nerves?” This practical question showed an attempt to understand the protocol of interviewing rather than just the basics of how to conduct interviews. Additionally, she wrestled with some difficult questions in Journal Entry 8:

My voice is present, but I am not. It’s a little tricky in a few paragraphs, though. I don’t like addressing the reader directly, and I don’t want to bring more of myself into it and say “I” because then it becomes about my experience there, and I want to convey something more than just that. Also, making it flow is really difficult. I don’t know why, but I seem to have issues with organization. I feel like I kind of skip around from the atmosphere, to food, and then to the details about parking and price. How do you include boring facts like hours and price into the Article? Should it be in the beginning or towards the end? That stuff just seems to break up the flow. Couldn’t I just include it in a side note under the title?

Her attempt to answer these questions illustrated a more profound understanding of the genre and of writing in general. Because the cited benefits occurred on a more global plane and were difficult to achieve, the questions truly indicate that Jane had reached a greater understanding, or at least she was able to identify key issues while writing her Articles.

Furthermore, Jane experienced positive outcomes in terms of *personal insight*. Some of her realizations related to future aspirations: “[I learned] what I was interested in writing professionally” (Q4). In Journal Entry 8, she stated her

aspirations more explicitly: “I also think I may not be so interested in actively pursuing this field. I would like perhaps to free lance on the side, but I have no desire at this point to work for a magazine all the time.” She also learned important information about her personality—“I’ve learned I’m not nearly as competitive as I thought” (Q4)—and her preferences—“I’m finding it a little boring to write the interview” (J9). Perhaps more significantly, Jane learned about her writing: “As for what I have learned about writing in general? I need to quit whining and get out there and do it, I have a lot to learn, and the field is competitive, but it can be done if one pursues” (J8).

Despite the positive changes Jane experienced in the semester, her *confidence* did not improve. When responding to the question, “I feel like my writing has improved this semester,” she produced a neutral response. She also made other statements at the end of the semester that indicate uncertainty in this area. On Questionnaire 4 she stated, “My writing has more flaws than I realized.” Later in the same questionnaire she acknowledged some changes, but she placed a caveat on the response: “I guess that [the maturity in the last paper] shows some development, although I have a ways to go.” She then went on to say, “I think that despite my lack of improvements in writing (okay, so they have gotten better...but my writing has by no means been transformed) I have learned quite a bit.” Thus, we see that a positive change in performance did not necessarily correlate with a positive change in confidence.

Her “success” and reported positive outcomes in the class did not help her realize positive change in transformation within the text, known as *conceptualization*. It appears that while she was able to improve on the basic concepts, she might not have realized how to make these improvements affect her overall writing style, choices, or presentation. Some of the benefits she reported in the enhanced integration variable show evidence of more complex thinking, but the actual text seems to be written in much the same manner as it was in the beginning of the semester. For example, the leads she used show improvement, but the change is conceptual and skill-based rather than transformative. In the first Article, she began: “Last fall, I spent four months

sitting in front of the computer screen feeling my eyes glaze over and contact lenses harden from lack of moisture.” This example is interesting, effective at telling rather than showing, and brief. It does, however, lack in clarity to some degree, careful proofreading, and conciseness (it needs to get to the point quickly). In the fourth Article, she began:

[The interviewee], a 1998 graduate of [the university], has the privilege, or burden, of being both a student and teacher. He currently teaches Freshman Composition and Technical Writing at [another university] while pursuing his Ph.D. in American Literature, an aspiration he’s had since the beginning of his college career, “My ultimate goals were to get my Ph.D. and a tenure-track job at a university.”

The first sentence of this example is appropriately effective in that it captures the reader’s interest quickly and is cleverly written. This marks an improvement. However, from that point on, it dabbles in too much detail for a lead, needs proofreading, and uses ineffective or duplicate information. Thus, while Jane made some textual improvements, she had not changed the way she approached the presentation of the information within the text nor had she made any stylistic improvements beyond what was needed to improve in the genre. Text that would show evidence of transformation would have different wording choices and might sound “more mature” stylistically. Jane seemed to have successfully determined how to improve as a magazine writer without improving as a writer.

Another example of this point was her improvements in “showing rather than telling.” In her first paper, she wrote:

Despite the difficult living arrangement, my roommate and I formed a deep friendship. She encouraged me to focus on what I *had* learned during my first semester at [the university]. It was in [a hall at the university] that I learned the most important lessons: to share, to respect other’s space and speak up for mine, and to make the best of a less-than-perfect situation, which is life.

Here, she revealed what she learned when she should be providing examples that illustrate the learning as it occurred.

She showed a better understanding of this concept in the last Article by incorporating more of the interviewee's quotes to show the readers what he believed rather than telling them:

[The interviewee] lists Hemingway, Percy, and Joyce, as major influences on his writing and life, along with Woody Allen films.

"I love love *love* Annie Hall," he exclaims. "It's kind of my barometer for every subsequent movie."

[The interviewee's] ideal future plans are to return to [the university] and teach, continue to improve his fiction, eventually freelance write travel essays for magazines, get married, and own a house near the Greenbelt.

"It really comes down to the market place. For my whole career, people mentioned how competitive the market is, but I blew it off. Now I see the reality of it."

Jane had improved her ability to show the reader what she meant, but she had not changed the way in which she presented the information. She still wrote in the same style, employed similar techniques, and incorporated the same kind of information. She had simply learned how to tailor her writing to fit the genre of magazine writing rather than learning how to improve her writing.

Thus, it seems that her lack of interest, sometime difficulty in creating motivation and/or incentives to compensate for disinterest, and low writing self-efficacy inhibited her ability to experience transformative benefits even though she was able to compensate effectively for these sometime negative stimuli in her performance. However, just because her text did not show evidence of transformation does not mean she did not experience it to some degree in her thinking or her future writing applications. She did experience a positive change, which marks an improvement in her writing. As this is often the goal of education and was her goal for the course, "To

learn to write interesting and effective magazine Articles, to not dread interviews and research, and to basically understand how the process works” (introduction paper), her “failure” to exhibit a transformation in her writing, although disappointing, did not make her any less successful. This thought is best expressed by Jane’s own words: “It’s not transformation and it’s not not-transformation. It’s a change, a development, a new stage in my writing... Although my writing isn’t something altogether new and wonderful, my knowledge is what came out of this class transformed” (Q4).

***Andres: An Unchanged Story?***

Andres was a junior Communications major who played baseball for the University and hoped to find a career “that will deal with either Advertising, to show off my creative side, or Public Relations, to show off my people person skills” (introduction paper). He described himself as a competitor “who gets a rush from breathing in the pressure of any obstacle.” He also claimed to be “a doer rather than a dreamer because I do not plan to watch the train pass me by. I take everything head on because once again I am a competitor and those obstacles are what build character. I hate the word ‘can’t’ and discourage people from using it” (introduction paper). Like Jane, Andres enrolled in the course by choice rather than as a requirement because “there is no one set type of writing and I am interested in learning little by little other ways that I can put my words down on paper” (Q1). His goals for the course “besides passing” were “to increase my knowledge on the different types of communication that are out in society and how effective it could be to me if I ever decide to use the magazine writing skills I gain from this class. I hope to improve on my writing skills. I want to make it sharper and clearer when getting my meaning across” (introduction paper). His future aspirations were to play baseball and to work for a company where he had to “write down information on paper so that the company heads know what is going on with the business” (Q1).

In terms of his perceptions of and towards his writing, Andres described his writing ability as “ok to good” and stated, “I’m just a normal sit down and write

what's on my mind type of writer" (Q1). He enjoyed "sitting down when writing. It makes me feel calm and relaxed. I guess I'd call this emotion, daydreaming, because before I write that's what I do" (Q1). He feels writing is important because "I see this time of my life as having a big impact on my future and if I succeed in school so will I succeed in life" (introduction paper). He also appeared to have great confidence in his abilities, despite the grammatical and structural errors riddled throughout his quotes. His perceptions of his writing strengths and weaknesses were: "My writing skills are that I am very creative which means I am able to elaborate extensively on my writing. My grammatical and punctuation skills are also very strong. My weakness is that I sometimes explain things that might be too complicated for others to understand. This is very rare though it could happen from time to time" (introduction paper).

This brief synopsis of Andres depicts a seemingly confident young man who believed in his great potential, both as a professional athlete and as a professional in the field of Advertising or Public Relations. However, his behavior over the course of the semester painted a slightly different picture. Andres's dedication to baseball often interfered with his work in class because he did not seem to understand how to negotiate school and sports. During his interview, he told me that he knew there was an assignment due the following day (a publication analysis), but that he would not be able to turn it in because the team had to go on the road for a game. I asked him if he had thought about getting the assignment done and turning it in early or talking to Paula about his options. I also asked him what he had done in the past (This was his third year in school) and he shrugged his shoulders. His strategy seemed to and continued to be simply not turning in certain assignments. As a result, the data set for Andres is incomplete.

Each of these clues to Andres as a person provides information into the conditions that would lead to the unchanged *achievement* and *ranked achievement* scores he experienced during the semester. As one might expect from his placement into the category of "no change," Andres's grades and scores (see Table 4.27) and his ranks



(see Table 4.28) from Paula and the judges remained relatively the same with each assignment. His rank scores are particularly telling because they indicate that he turned in the worst or close to worst paper in the class, indicating a performance that was often much lower than the rest of his classmates. The judges' score sheet

<b>Table 4.27: Achievement Results for Andres</b>			
<b>Article Number</b>	<b>Paula's Grade</b>	<b>Judge 1's Score</b>	<b>Judge 2's Score</b>
1	65	4	4
2	55	3	3
3	50	3	3
4	59	4	4

comments indicate why he failed to realize much improvement. They depict such problems as: "bad grammatical issues," "telling and not showing," "poorly written," "inappropriate angle," and "could incorporate the information differently." Because he received extensive feedback from Paula detailing these and other problems, it is clear he was unable to improve upon key skills and concepts despite his knowledge of

<b>Table 4.28: Ranked Achievement Results for Andres</b>		
<b>Article Number</b>	<b>Paula's Rank</b>	<b>Judge's Rank</b>
1	21	23
2	21	22
3	20	20
4	21	18

the areas in need of attention.

*The conditions.* Several conditions seemed to contribute to this lack of change, although some are more prominent than others. As in the case of Jane, these conditions represent a complex web of interactions that combine to produce the

effects Andres did or did not realize. (For a visual representation of the relationship between conditions, see Figure 4.9). However, not as many conditions were evident in Andres's case as he did not elaborate as much as Jane and did not cite as many sources as evidence of his improvement.

One of the key conditions that influenced Andres's potential for change was *experience/ability*. For him, unfamiliarity with the writing style seemed to be an important barrier, which is why he answered the question "I find the process of learning to write for magazines difficult" (Q3) with a strong indication that the sentiments were true of him. In his interview, he mentioned why he was having difficulty: "I still am not used to this type of writing." He also gave indications in Questionnaire 2 as to what would help him improve: "Experience. When you actually go out into society and do what you have been learning. I feel it makes you more aware of what society is looking for." Thus, he believed the more *experience* he had the greater his chances for change.

Samples from Andres's text indicate that *ability* was a contributing factor to his lack of change because he struggled with basic level writing skills, such as grammar, punctuation, word usage, proofreading, etc. although he did not think he had problems with these issues. Additionally, Paula identified *ability* as one of the factors limiting his improvement. She felt that Andres was a student who understood what was expected of him but was unable or unwilling to apply the understanding to his text. He even "misspelled his interviewee's name throughout" his final Article (final interview). Therefore, *experience* had the potential to produce positive change for Andres once he accumulated more writing opportunities, but his *ability* seemed to negatively influence the occasion to change.

Another influential condition for Andres was *motivation/incentives*. In many instances, the assignments in the class acted as an *incentive*. He tended to feel favorably towards the Articles if he was able to realize some career-related benefit through them: "I want to do good writing to follow-up my PR" (interview). He also

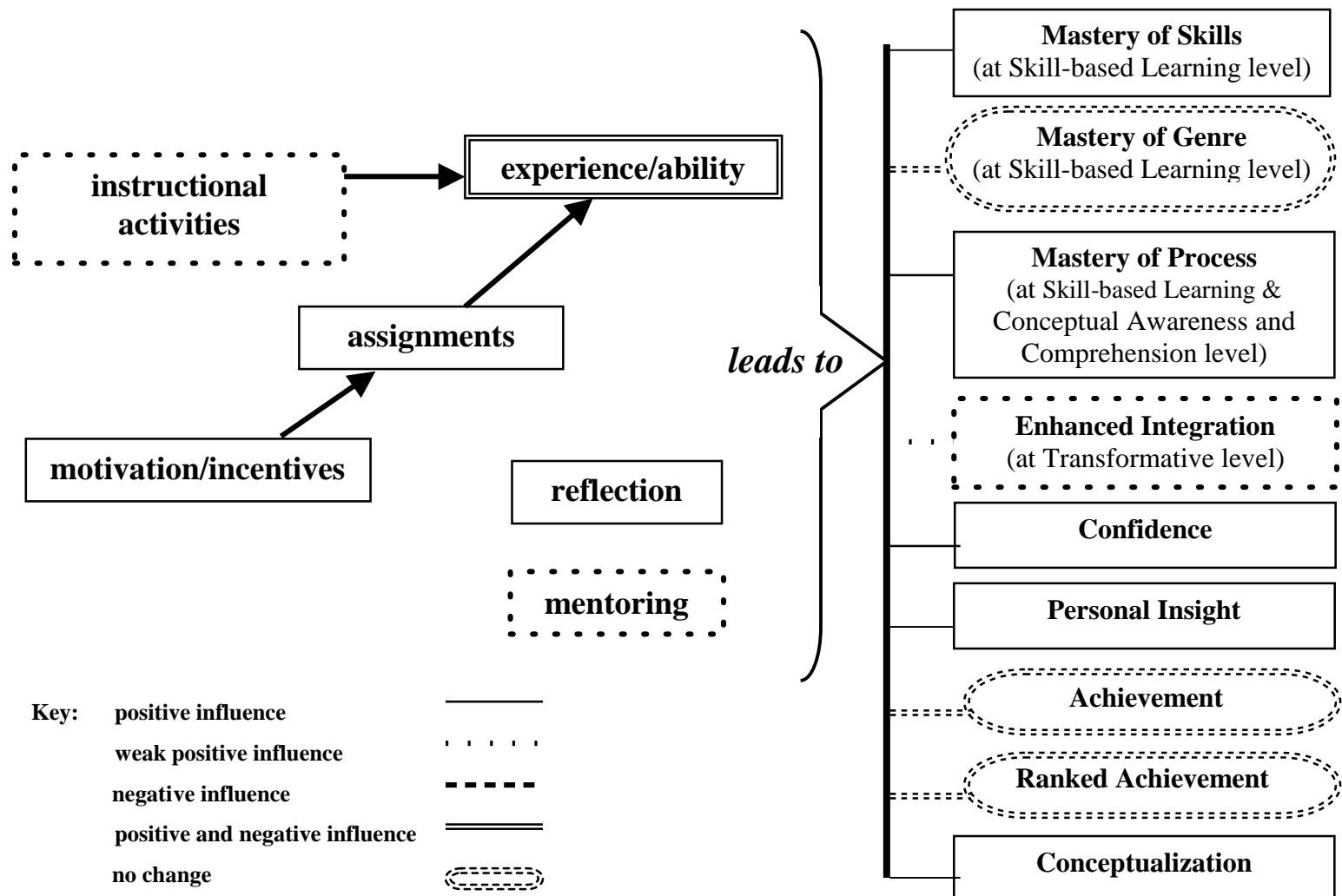


Figure 4.9: Model of Change within Andres

felt the writing he produced during the *assignments* “will look good on my resume” (interview). When the assignments did not seem to provide career benefits, he focused on general reasons why he should take pleasure in writing them—“It is good to produce what people ask” (interview)—or certain aspects of the writing he particularly enjoyed—“I got to write how I felt and was thinking” (Q1); “I had a chance to find out how this person felt about the school and if the person had similar experiences as me while attending the school” (J9). He also endorsed the belief that they could lead to personal insights and increase his knowledge base:

Some of the benefits I think I can gain from this project [Article 4] are to learn how to do interviews, as well as learn one person’s life choices after [the university] and hopefully see the mistakes or right paths they took and to get tips from them that I can one day use for my own career choices. I like to write and I also feel that this type of writing can help me when any time I might have to write an article dealing with a person (J7).

For Andres, the *assignments* were motivating in that they gave him the opportunity to gain *experience* and increase his *ability*, a necessary element for change in his case.

However, in some instances, the specifications of the assignments represented a challenge he had to negotiate. For example, when asked what was helping him learn about magazine writing, he stated, “How condense [sic] my writing has to be. How I have to write about something only being given a certain amount of words to write it in” (Q3). For the last article, he was more concerned about the logistics of meeting with his interviewee, which seemed to threaten his ability to complete the assignment: “It was very difficult at first to meet with the person I had to interview because at the time she was pregnant and could give berth at any time. The day we were going to meet she gave berth and left me with nothing to write about. It was not until two weeks later that I was finally able to meet with her which turned out to be a big treat for me” (J9).

Not all of his writing *incentives* were assignment based. Andres also talked about the conditions that helped him learn. He claimed that he learned well “if I am in an

environment that offers knowledge not only in class but illustrates how it works outside of class” and “if the environment is not distractive and very stable” (introduction paper). Thus, motivation/incentives helped him realize positive improvements in both his willingness to approach assignments and in his general potential for change.

Another condition of some importance to Andres was *reflection* because he felt it helped him improve his writing: “When I reflect on what I have already done and apply it to another job. When I reflect I already know the outcome and can use the reflection to not make a mistake or do something better in the job” (Q2). His responses to the Likert-based questions on Questionnaires 2 and 3 also illustrated his preference for reflection. He strongly believed that the following questions were true of him: “The process of reflection, or ‘thinking about something you have done,’ is beneficial for me personally” (Q2); “The act of writing is beneficial to me or my ‘personal growth/understanding’ (Q2); “I believe reflection can produce transformation” (Q2); and “The reflection components are helping me understand what is going on with more personal issues in my life (my feelings, my views, etc.)” (Q3). He seemed to believe in the transformative nature of reflection as it pertained to his personal development. He was not, however, as confident in the idea of written reflection or metawriting, although he continued to believe in its benefits as evidenced by his moderate agreement with these questions: “I think writing about my writing will ‘produce new insight,’ ‘open my eyes,’ or make me ‘aware of differences’ (Q2) and “I think writing about my writing will help me ‘understand’ or ‘grow’ (Q2). Thus, metawriting might have helped him become aware of new things or helped him develop, but he was uncertain about whether it benefited more personal aspects of himself or his writing, which was clear from his neutral response to these questions: “I think writing about my writing will help me ‘improve as a person’ or achieve ‘positive personal improvement’” and “I think writing about my writing will help me ‘reconsider previous knowledge, beliefs, or feelings.’” Therefore, *reflection* had the potential to be a powerful agent of change for Andres because he seemed to

believe in its benefits. Its positive influence seems limited to Andres's prospective change, however, because it did not appear to interact with any other conditions.

During his reflective musings, Andres made minor references to two conditions, *instructional activities* and *mentoring*. Although they did not receive much attention, the conditions still seemed to influence him enough to merit a discussion, even though their contributions can only be considered weak influences due to their limited appearance.

Andres referenced *instructional activities* by mentioning the benefits he received from the supplementary readings: "I feel that this article was a good learning experience that illustrates good writing techniques and how to use them to create a good piece" (J6). He seemed to view the learning he received through the supplementary readings as "an experience" that enabled his learning and is therefore a positive way for him to increase his *experience/ability*.

Andres also claimed that *mentoring*, especially feedback helped him improve his writing: "I look for critics to talk to me about my writing. I don't want to put words on a piece of paper and have them all mixed-up so they don't make sense" (Q1). As he did not reference any other conditions while discussing mentoring, we can only deduce that it exhibited a weak positive influence on his potential for change.

*Effects.* Although these conditions did not lead to positive change in *achievement* and *ranked achievement* (see Figure 4.9 for a visual representation), Andres did experience positive effects in several areas.

Most of the effects Andres realized corresponded to Skill-based Learning and dealt with *mastery of skills* improvements. He felt he had learned "how to say so much with few words and make it interesting" (interview), to "bring out the descriptive words and the essence of something" (interview), and "to go more in depth with my descriptions. How I have to take in the surrounding I'm writing about before I write about it" (Q3). He also learned to question, "What brought the place or person out?" (interview). To accomplish a more vivid depiction of his subject, he now focused on "using the right wording to bring the details out" (interview) because "I

had to make those I am writing to see what I saw” (interview). His goals for each article were to adhere to the word limit and make the text “stand out” (interview). Even though he “had a hard time trying to put all the information I had using less writing to keep under a word count” (J4), he managed to produce the texts he wanted to produce in which “the words made sense and the words rolled off my tongue with no problem” (Q1).

Andres also described other effects he experienced during the semester. He felt more familiar with how to produce magazine writing. On Questionnaire 3, he answered the question “I am more comfortable writing magazine articles now than I was at the beginning of the semester” with a moderately agreeable response. He also mentioned that he learned about the skill of interviewing: “Interviewing was not as hard as I thought it would be...When I interviewed the person I tried to make them feel comfortable that way I was comfortable as well” (J9).

The realization of these outcomes also translated into *mastery of genre* at the Skill-based Level. The outcomes did not occur at the Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension Level because, although he made references to how writing in the genre should appear, he did so as if it were something he must learn to accomplish rather than as an understanding he must incorporate within his writing: “I must short up my writing, but it’s not that hard” (interview). For example, he talked about the elements of the genre as he critiqued the online articles of former students in Journal Entry 3. However, he tended to summarize the content rather than analyze how the writers approached or produced the text: “At the same time she portrays well the experience of working on campus by showing how easy it is to work on campus and still have enough time to get to class.” Later in the response, he stated, “Though it was a good article I feel she could have combined a few tips that she had, reason being so that the article would not look so long. Reading off the computer hurts the eyes and though this was not a very long article, less is better...If these tips were combined and shortened then this would make the article shorter and less for the reader to read on the computer.” These points were important considerations, but they

were superficial and indicated that Andres had missed some of the more conceptual issues (namely, style, presentation, structure of the text, etc.) that would improve his writing.

He made similar observations about the supplementary readings during Journal Entry 6: “I felt that the articles showed great development when being written from beginning to end.” He then described his learning as a result of these readings:

I learned that having good research is always important because the story you cover must be accurate and in good sequence. I also learned that a good beginning and conclusion can either make or break your article because you first need to capture the reader's attention at the beginning and then give the reader closure at the end. The angle is also important because it shows that there is something being talked about.

While these reported outcomes show more attention to what students should be learning about genre, the thoughts still were not as sophisticated or as accurate as they should have been and certainly do not compare to the changes his peers (Jane, for example) were able to realize. Thus, Andres did not appear to make much improvement in his knowledge of genre.

However, Andres was able to realize a positive change in his *mastery of process* at Skill-based Level. He indicated he was learning more about how to produce his writing: “I learned that not all the notes I have will be able to go on the article, that is why I use those notes which are most important and that the person reading would find interesting” (J4). Even his admitted challenges became learning opportunities: “Finding the information was hard, and putting it all together to write the articles was very time consuming and because of this had to learn to balance my schedule. I learned quick that putting a good article together with tape is the only way to get an article sound good. Writing articles is tough and cutting and pasting is the only way to make this work” (J4). Some of his thought processes approached the Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension level because of their reference to how revisions might be received in the field of magazine writing: “It hurts to take out your best



work, but it makes it sound smooth...it makes it sound better and less cheesy” (interview).

Despite his missed opportunity to experience many changes at the Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension Level, Andres was able to undergo Transformation to some degree. He showed evidence of *enhanced integration* during a discussion of what he had learned about writing profile articles: “What I am learning about profiles is that cannot just simply do a description about a person and that is it. You must bring that person to life on paper and make the reader believe that when they read the profile that they were the ones talking to that person” (J9). Although this realization was not as complicated or deep as those Jane ascertained, he still recognized the importance of presentation in a profile. However, understanding that one must breath life into a person on paper and actually being able to do that are two separate issues. Thus, it is possible to experience enhanced integration without also experiencing conceptualization.

Fortunately, for Andres, he was able to realize *conceptualization*. As in the case of Jane, this result is seemingly counterintuitive. Jane improved throughout the semester by learning how to incorporate the necessary skills, concepts, and style inherent within magazine writing, but the way she incorporated the basic elements and the sound of her writing did not change. Andres, on the other hand, did not seem to benefit from participation in the course until one examines his writing style and presentation. The grammatical problems inherent within the early text samples continued to appear throughout his papers, thereby inhibiting his ability to advance in performance scores, but the way in which he attempted to incorporate some of the key concepts did change. For example, in his second article, he wrote:

[Professor’s name], a professor at [the university] with a degree in law, is a “Non-Conformist” who brings his teaching skills to build on to the English Department.

With his life developing while on the road, [the professor] was first, born in El Paso, Texas. [The professor] has one brother and two sisters

within his family. After leaving Texas he then moved to New Mexico where he was raised and started his college education...

In the fourth article, also a profile, he wrote:

Sitting very calmly at a table in the [name of the] Coffee Shop located at [the university], [the interviewee] comes across as being intelligent and gentle. Holding her newborn baby in her arms she got up from her seat and greeted me in a polite and warm manner. Her greeting made me feel like I had known her forever and that we were just two old friends about to rekindle old memories...

This second sample paints a remarkably different picture of the article's subject. The interviewee in Article 4 seems warm, inviting, and alive, especially when compared to the professor in Article 2. We know nothing about him except facts. His story reads like a personal resume rather than the caricature that it should be. The reader gets a greater sense of the mother in the second sample. We can almost visualize her, which is the point of the profile. Readers should feel as if they got to know the individual, even if the encounter is seemingly brief. The difference between these two introductions is so drastic that it almost seems as if two different people wrote them, except for the telltale grammatical issues and the lack of careful attention to important magazine writing concepts (shorter paragraphs, more of a hook, more direct language, etc.).

Additionally, Andres' uses of quotes improved. In Article 2, he failed to use any of the subject's own voice until the very last paragraph in which he stated:

"Who so would be a man must be a non-conformist." quoted from Henry David Thoreaux is what [the professor] tries to live by. "I admire people who take a stand though there is social pressure, especially against civil disobedience."-[the professor].

In this sample, there is no real link between the professor's words and who he was as a person. It is unclear what this particular quote is trying to accomplish. Furthermore,

the quote is not incorporated into the text in any legitimate way, it is not punctuated correctly, and the correct spelling of Thoreau is overlooked.

In Article 4, Andres made some drastic changes in how he incorporated quotes:

The other reason why she chose this major was due to an influential author by the name of Ray Bradbury. [The interviewee] said she loved his work. She described his writing as having, “clean imagery and very poetic language.” She also went on to say that he was, “well written, meaning not sloppy and not too wordy.”

While there are still some obvious problems with this text, Andres did show a positive change in how he conceptualized both the need for quotes and the incorporation of these quotes. Consequently, it is possible to assume that a student can experience positive changes in conceptualization without improving his or her overall performance.

Another area of positive change for Andres was *confidence*. From the very beginning, he seemed confident in his writing. Throughout the semester, this confidence grew to a certain degree. When asked directly about his confidence in Questionnaire 3 (“I am confident about what I have written so far this semester”), he responded that the question was moderately true of him. Yet, later in the same questionnaire, he answered with strong agreement to these questions: “I feel like my writing is changing as a result of this class” and “I feel like my writing has improved this semester.” These latter responses suggest that Andres had confidence in the writing he was producing for the class, despite low performance scores from Paula. Therefore, he revealed that he felt he was improving with or without confirmation from the professor.

The final effect of change to undergo positive results for Andres was *personal insight*. He portrayed new knowledge about both time management—“I had to learn to balance my schedule” (J4)—and his future opportunities—“To hear how she [the interviewee] did and the types of jobs that are out there can show me the choices I have when I graduate from [the university]” (J7). However, because these represent

the only two allusions he made to this effect, the changes he experienced were only moderately positive despite previously reported outcomes that could indirectly reference personal writing benefits.

***Rob: A Story of Mixed Change***

Rob was a senior English Writing and Rhetoric major who was not sure about what made him unique. He was sure that he was “a laid back person who likes to relax. My parents like to call this laziness on occasion. I just do not like to get worked up about much...I just like to do the things I enjoy. Don’t sweat the petty things, and don’t pet the sweaty things” (introduction paper). Although he did not specify why he took the class, he did mention what he hoped to accomplish while enrolled: “Besides a good grade, my main goal in this course is to get a better understanding of magazine writing. In fact, I would like to get any useful insight since I really know nothing about it” (introduction paper). He also hoped that the class would help him “make up my mind” on “if I want to explore journalism or not” (introduction paper). He also seemed uncertain about his future aspirations: “I also do not know much about what I want as far as a career goes....So I can’t even say for sure where I will be in five years” (introduction paper).

Despite certain uncertainties, Rob was confident in his writing ability, which he called “above average” (Q1). He then described why he held these beliefs:

I feel this way because through reading other people’s work, I have realized that there are a lot of below average writers out in the real world. Not just students, but those who are employed to actually write for a living. I think many people have a problem with clarity. I also consider myself above average because I am an English Writing Major. Just because I am an English Writing Major does not make me a good writer, but it sounds better than saying that my parents have wasted their money on 4 years of education (Q1).

As a self-professed unconscious writer—“when I write I do not consciously think about how I am writing something. I just do it” (introduction paper)—Rob was a bit unsure about his feelings towards writing. His process, which he called “deliberate,”

enabled him to “feel comfortable and free to hide behind my computer screen or my pen and paper” (Q1). He did value improvements as “extremely important” because “I envision myself using writing in all aspects of my life. Even if I do not end up with a writing based career, it is important to know how to write well. Unfortunately, if your writing is viewed as poor, you can be looked down upon or seen as inferior. It might cost me an embarrassing moment or even more significantly, a job opportunity” (Q1).

In terms of his perceived writing strengths and weaknesses, he thought his greatest strength was his “ability to say what I need to say in as few words as possible. For the most part, I like to get to the point as soon as possible. But I think this can also get me in trouble, especially when writing excruciatingly long academic papers.” He also described his biggest weakness as “my lack of knowledge in the field of grammar and spelling. I can’t even spell grammar correctly” (introduction paper).

This brief synopsis of Rob depicts a bright and charming young man with an ability to express himself well on paper. He seemed to lack some direction though because he was often unsure about how he felt, except when it came to his writing. My understanding of Rob, however, is limited to the picture he created on paper because I had little interaction with him outside of the interview and he was quiet, almost painfully so, in class. He sat in the back left corner of the room and rarely interacted during class except during peer reviews. Additionally, the textual picture he created in journal and questionnaire responses was not complete because he did not turn in all of the reflection entries and he maintained his “get to the point” attitude in those he did submit.

Each of these clues to Rob as a person provides information into the conditions that would lead to the negative change he experienced in *achievement* and *ranked achievement*. However, I must first observe that Rob cannot be considered an example of negative change alone because this label would minimize the positive changes he did make. As one can see from Table 4.29, Rob’s *achievement* scores

improved slightly between Articles 1 and 2, then he produced his lowest score of the semester. He then comparatively improved again between Articles 3 and 4, but he did not achieve a grade as high as the one he produced on Article 1(or 2 for that matter).

<b>Table 4.29: Achievement Results for Rob</b>			
<b>Article Number</b>	<b>Paula's Grade</b>	<b>Judge 1's Score</b>	<b>Judge 2's Score</b>
1	92	5	5
2	95	5	5
3	78	5	5
4	88	5	5

Thus, one must look at the difference between Article 1 and Article 4, which should have embodied the cumulative effects of his learning through the semester, to determine whether or not Rob experienced a change. From these scores, it appeared that Rob ended at a level lower than where he began, thereby placing him in the negative change category in terms of achievement.

The judges' scores on the same table illustrate a different picture because they remain the same for each article. However, the scores do not reflect differences between papers at the high and low ends of the same score level 5, which is why one must jointly consider *ranked achievement* (see Table 4.30). Here again, we see some fluctuations in ranks between improvements and lowered performances, but a comparison between the first and last articles shows negative change, with Article 4 generating a lower score and rank than Article 1. The judges' comments on the score sheets track his end of semester regression from "solid, but not as clever as it could be" and "informative but flat" to "not written for an online medium," "did not

<b>Table 4.30: Ranked Achievement Results for Rob</b>		
<b>Article Number</b>	<b>Paula's Rank</b>	<b>Judge's Rank</b>
1	9	17
2	3	11
3	17	14
4	16	19

incorporate enough of the interviewee's voice," and "standard, but not exciting." These comments become important because they reflect the concerns he expressed about his writing (discussed later). They also provide information as to why he was able to experience so many positive changes (see Figure 4.10 and the discussion on the effects of change) without impacting his performance score—his ability to identify the important elements and issues did not transfer into his production of the text despite his ability to identify the areas in need of improvement.

*The conditions.* As with the preceding students, the conditions relevant to Rob's case indicate what led to the lack of change he illustrated in his performance (see Figure 4.10). Yet Rob's conditions are especially interesting because he went from an "A" to a "B" student. Were these conditions less salient for him or was he influenced by fewer factors? In the end, it appeared the answer to both of these questions was no—Rob realized many positive changes during the semester that simply did not translate into his performance scores.

The condition that seemed to have the most impact for Rob was *assignments*, which he identified when asked what helped him learn about magazine writing. He responded, "Just the assignments in general" (Q3). They were so influential for him because they demanded that he be flexible as a writer: "Each assignment calls for a different purpose and audience and as a writer you need to adapt to them" (J9).

But just because he adapted to each article did not mean he enjoyed the process he endured during textual production: "It was hard to be concise, and it seems like they [the articles] had to be perfect" (interview). Rob also had differing reactions to each assignment. He enjoyed Article 1 because of its personal and creative nature: "We had to stick to [the university] genre, but it was still flexible and easier to write" (interview). He found the third more difficult because "it is harder to go through the descriptive process" and because "I found myself staring at the computer screen while writing the review [Article 3] because I ran out of adjectives and I had difficulty incorporating the audience" (interview). Despite his difficulty with Article 3, he did

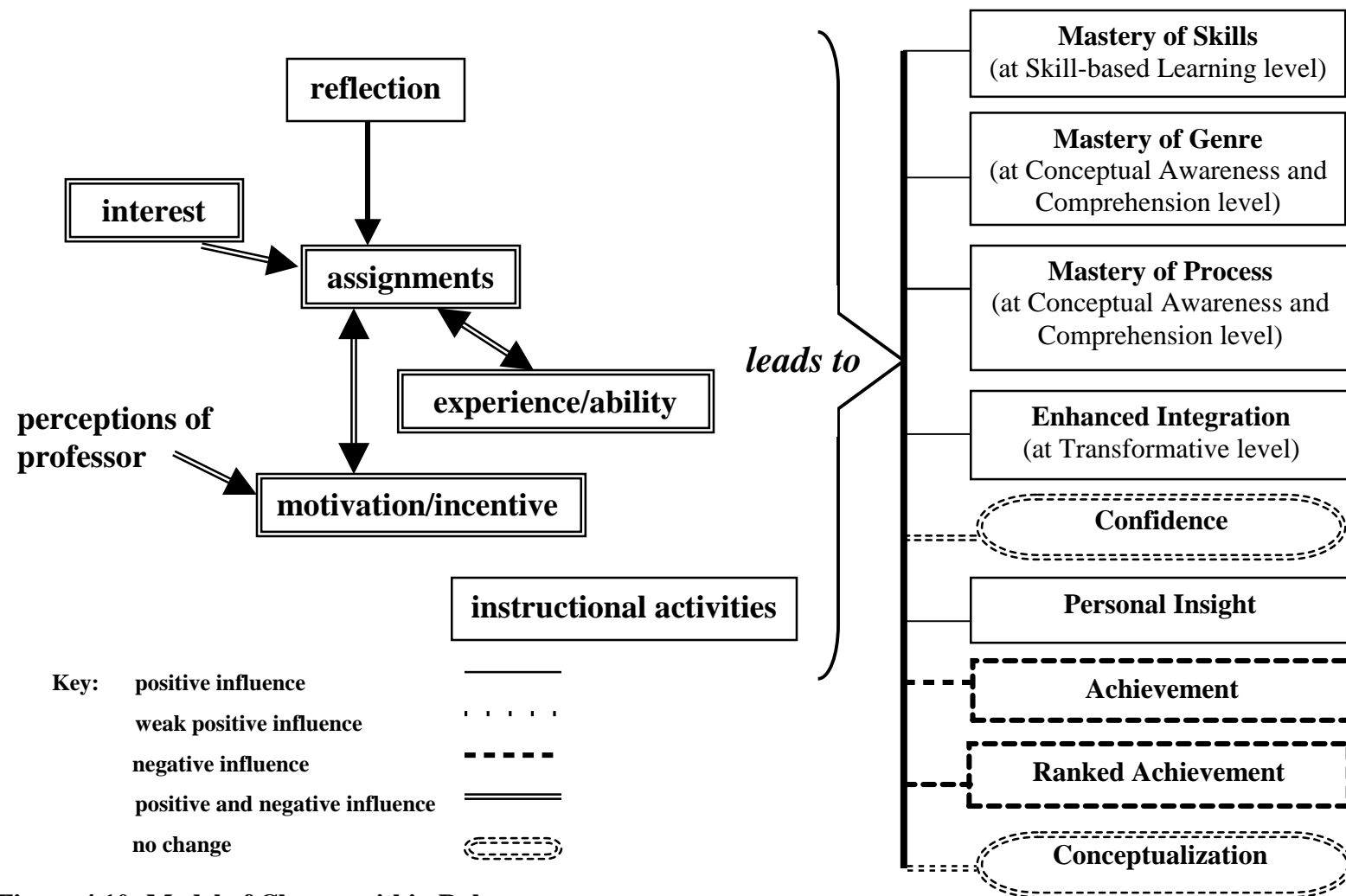


Figure 4.10: Model of Change within Rob



find some benefit in it: “Articles like this [Article 3] will help me understand that in magazine writing, the audience’s needs are what matters” (J8).

In Journal Entry 8, he detailed his opinions of each assignment the class had written up to that point in the semester:

[In the first article] there was no need for doing research and I could write whatever I wanted to write about. I enjoyed the freedom of that article assignment.

The second article was more difficult because I had to write about a specific topic and I had to do interviews and research. I did not have as much freedom as I did in the first article.

Writing a review about a club has been by far the most difficult for me because it requires so much detail and description...This is hard for me to do because for the most part, my writing is direct and to the point” (J8).

Later in the semester, Rob had the opportunity to reflect on Article 4. He expressed the concerns he felt towards writing the assignment: “With every interview I am afraid that it might be awkward or that the person I am interviewing might feel uncomfortable. Or God forbid that I might insult them or offend them because I might ask them some stupid question. I am also afraid that the questions I am asking might not be as in-depth as they think they should be” (J7). He then expressed his feelings after its completion: “Writing the [fourth] article has been more difficult than any of the other ones. It requires a lot more descriptions than any of the other articles that I have written for this class” (J9).

Thus, it is clear that his feelings towards the assignments influenced his ability to learn from them. Although he experienced the most frustration with the third and fourth articles, he ranked them in Questionnaire 3 as 1<sup>st</sup> (Article 3) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Article 4) as the most helpful of all the activities associated with the course.

Rob’s feelings towards the assignments also impacted his feelings towards his *ability*. He generally felt that he was capable of writing the articles and that he had

improved in the field as evidenced by his moderately supportive response to the question “I am more comfortable writing magazine articles now than I was at the beginning of the semester” (Q3) was true of him. However, the assignments also had a negative influence on his ability, or at least the outcomes of his ability. Because he had difficulty in creating a vivid profile, “I think as a result, my profile might end up being a little dry and seem like more of a fact sheet than an article worth reading” (J9).

Assignments also conversely impacted Rob’s perceptions of his *experience* because he viewed them as a measure of how much experience he had, “They are not like anything I’ve had to do before,” or how much he needed, “I guess the fact that I haven’t been comfortable with some of the articles that I have written has showed me that I have a lot to learn” (Q3); “This is really the first profile I have done—so that is an additional challenge” (J9). In certain instances, Rob felt his experience would give him an advantage when writing an article: “I think it would be easier to write for this audience [students] because I am a student, and I think I can relate better to the audience. It deals with issues that are valued by my peers” (J4). Thus, Rob seemed to feel that the more experience he had, the better off he would be, indicating that it could positively influence change for him. However, the condition acted as a negative stimulus when he did not feel he had enough experience or ability. So for Rob, *experience/ability* produced both positive and negative effects on his potential for change and on his perceptions of the assignments.

Despite the professed benefits he received from the assignments, Rob did not seem to benefit from them if they involved *service-learning* as it was implemented in the course:

I do not feel that this service learning project [Article 4] was that beneficial to me. This was my first service learning project. But I didn’t even view it as a service learning project. I don’t feel that writing articles for a university is that big of a service. I would consider something like tutoring children or helping the homeless as a service, and then learning and growing from that experience. Writing

for the university didn't seem like service because I feel like in magazine writing, we would have to write similar articles any way—writing for the school just gave us a specific angle.

Therefore, service-learning as a condition had no effect on Rob's potential for change.

A condition that seemed related to assignments for Rob was interest. When asked what made a difference for him in the class, he stated, "Subject matter" (interview). He also admitted that he struggled with certain assignments because they were "hard to make interesting" (interview). Consequently, interest had a positive impact on Rob's opinions of the assignments when he found the subject matter interesting and a negative impact when he was disinterested.

As with the two previous students, *motivation/incentives* often helped Rob compensate for the negative effects of other conditions. And as with the previous students, Rob was motivated by different incentives. One of the motivating factors for him was his *perceptions of the professor*: "If I see that he or she [a professor] is putting forth the effort to truly teach me the material, it will motivate me more to put forth the effort to truly learn it...and hopefully succeed" (introduction paper). However, it is unclear how Rob felt towards Paula, so this factor could have had either a positive or negative influence.

Another incentive for Rob was certain aspects of the *assignments*. He looked forward to the final article because it "should help my poor interviewing skills and also get me to talk to strangers more easily. Also by talking with the person I have interviewed, I will get a better understanding of what I can do with my English Writing major once I graduate" (J7). Yet the final article also scared him because of its potential impact on his grades: "Knowing that this article is worth 25 percent of my grade makes me twinge. Ouch." (J9) Therefore, the nature of the assignments and motivation/incentives shared a mutually influential relationship because the assignment specifications sometimes negatively affected his willingness to do the assignments, so he created incentives to motivate him to produce the text.

One of the main ways Rob processed the results of his assignments was through *reflection*: “When I got my [third article] back, I needed to go over and *reflect* on how bad I did. But more importantly—figure out why I didn’t do as well as I thought” (J9). Because Rob did not turn in Questionnaire 2, little else is known about reflection besides its positive influence and his belief that “reflection can lead to improvements” (J9).

The final condition used to explain Rob’s potential for change was *instructional activities*. Rob seemed to learn several valuable lessons from guest speakers who motivated him to start writing “clips,” or published articles, for his writing portfolio as a means of beginning his professional career (J5). Because he did not mention any other instructional activities and his reference to guest speakers only appeared once, this condition emitted a weak positive influence on his potential for change.

*The effects.* Despite Rob’s negative changes in his performance scores, Rob is best characterized as a student who experienced mixed changes because he was also able to realize many positive effects (see Figure 4.10 for a visual representation). One area of positive change was *mastery of skills*, which pertained to the Skill-based Learning Level. During the semester, he often revealed the issues he contemplated while writing the articles: “I realize I need to make the reader feel like he or she is actually in the club” (J8). He also described what he learned about his skills as a result of the assignments, as depicted in the following quotes:

I have found that it is extremely hard for me to describe every single aspect of the atmosphere to the reader. When I start in on the descriptions, I feel like I am rambling on about nothing (J8).

Articles like the [third] and the [second] forced me to realize that it is sometimes hard to be descriptive about your topic and to also always keep the audience in mind. (Q3).

Mostly I have learned that I am really bad at interviewing...my problem is that I don’t even think about coming up with follow-up questions. When I start writing the profile, I then realize that I don’t have enough information, or that there are gaps in my story. So the

interviewing process has been a slow one based on trial and mostly errors (J9).

It is hard to make someone ‘come to life on the page,’ especially when the only way you have talked to them is over the phone. I have a hard time being descriptive and coming up with good adjectives to describe the person (J9).

Although Rob may not have had a positive experience with all aspects of the assignments, the realizations he made about them were extremely beneficial for him, thereby indicating a positive outcome.

Most of the change Rob was able to experience concerned *mastery of genre* and is classified as Conceptual Awareness and Understanding. One of the key issues he grasped during the semester was the importance of audience. At one point, he identified the purpose of the second article as one requiring “a special and significant emphasis on promoting the school” (J4) if he was to reach the intended audience, which is an important concept for a writer to grasp. He also recognized what he believed to be one of the principles of the class: “You learn to remember who your audience is and all writers should do this” (interview). Furthermore, he identified how the different needs of the audience would affect the production of the text:

What is different [between Article 1 and 2] is the audience and how the writer must adjust to that. Writing for the [first article’s] magazine, the writer needs to focus primarily on the alumni and not so much on the students. They need to in some ways, “persuade” the audience to remember how good [the university] is...the articles kind of rekindle past good memories. The [second article’s] magazine is geared more for the students (J4).

In addition to his knowledge of audience, Rob also learned the importance of description and elaboration. In a critique of former students’ articles, Rob stated: “I shouldn’t say that I did not like them, but they all were short—maybe too short. I think that some professors cannot be summed up into such short pieces...it is hard to describe intensity and passion in that few words” (J3). In Journal Entry 9, he

discussed how the need to elaborate created problems for him personally: “I thought I could come in and just write up some really short (and for an English writing major, 700 words is short) articles about whatever and that it would be a breeze. I didn’t realize how hard it would be until I am staring at my computer screen trying to stretch to get a hundred more words because I have nothing to say” (J9). Thus, we see additional evidence of positive change for Rob.

Rob also seemed to experience positive Conceptual Awareness and Understanding benefits pertaining to *mastery of process* because he addressed and confronted the troubles he faced: “I felt like I approached each article the same way, but maybe I shouldn’t have. Maybe that was the problem” (interview). Additionally, he found the assignment guidelines challenging to his previous approach: “I find the process so difficult because in 700 words, you have to be very precise and accurate in what you are trying to say” (J9). Whether or not Rob actually made changes as a result of the issues he raised about his process, it seemed that at least reflecting on these kinds of issues was beneficial for him. He could have decided that his process should have remained as it was, or he could have changed his strategy. Either choice was a positive solution.

Furthermore, Rob experienced positive Transformative change, namely that of *enhanced integration*, because he was able to present a new understanding of some difficult, globally-applicable concepts. These learning outcomes are as follows:

Audience is the most important factor and so is the magazine as opposed to your personal interests” (interview).

The articles “will help me in my ability to write for all genres of writing” (J8).

“Through this article [Article 3], I have learned I need to write for the intended audience. In the past I have had a tendency for writing for me instead of the audience. Articles like this will help me understand that in magazine writing, the audience’s needs are what matters” (J8).

“My writing style seems to always be the same—the words and sentence structures that I use. What is different [between the articles] is how I had to approach them. I had to keep different audiences in mind when writing every assignment” (J9).

Although these realizations occurred in the area of magazine writing, the notions he realized transfer to his writing in general, providing him with benefits useful in any genre.

One final effect that produced positive change for Rob was *personal insight*. As with the other students, Rob was able to gain some helpful personal information during the semester. On Questionnaire 3, he answered the question, “I will continue to pursue magazine writing after this class” with a neutral response. But later in the semester, he had decided the genre was not for him: “I do know now that I do not want to pursue a career in magazine writing” (J9). He also learned about his preferences and strengths: “I am uncomfortable talking with strangers and asking them questions” (J9). Furthermore, he learned how to approach the business of professional writing: “Even though the articles were not that interesting, it [writing the articles] enabled her [the speaker] to get her foot in the door, which is probably good advice for any writer. From this I realized that I should probably get going and get my feet wet as well—no matter who it is. It also proved that you have to start out small in the beginning and work your way up” (J5). These learning outcomes would be beneficial to his future endeavors.

One area that saw little change was Rob’s *confidence*. He began the semester feeling he was “above average,” leaving little room for improvement. This confidence may have decreased during the semester, as evidenced by his moderate agreeable feeling that the question “I am confident about what I have written so far this semester” (Q3) was *not* true of him. Later on in this questionnaire, he provided a neutral response to the question “I feel like my writing has improved this semester.” However, Rob made it clear that he did not experience change in this area during

Journal Entry 9: “I would describe my ability as the same as when I started this class. For the most part I still create and write in the same ways.”

Finally, despite positive strides in enhanced integration, Rob was not able to carry his Transformative learning into text through *conceptualization*. On Questionnaire 1, Rob stated, “A transformation could occur and one’s writing could go from horrible to spectacular, or vice versa.” It is also possible that a transformation could occur and not be evident in one’s writing. This is the case with Rob. The improvements he discussed in Enhanced Integration and other variables give every indication that his writing should show the benefits of his more developed thinking. However, once again, his enlightenment did not transfer to his writing. It is possible though that the change did not appear because he had a better command for the concepts than he thought. For example, in Article 1 he produced the following lead (introduction):

On my first day of school, I realized I probably represent a small minority group in [the university] community. I am not talking about race, gender, or economic background. I also am not referring to any physical or mental handicaps. What makes my situation so unique is that I am here at [the university]—for my second time around.

This example uses intriguing phrases to catch the reader’s attention. It is shocking in some ways, but it certainly provides the necessary hook. The sentences are short and to the point, as they should be in this instance. Rob did a persuasive job of beginning his piece. He provided all of the same qualities in the next sample from Article 4:

You don’t appreciate it until you are gone.”

This is what 1999 graduate [name of interviewee] has to say about her experience as an English Writing major at [the university].

While not as effective as the first example, Rob still showed evidence of having understood what was important and successful in the genre.

His texts also show places where he missed the opportunity to demonstrate conceptualized improvements. In his third article, he was attempting to describe the



atmosphere of a piano bar. He conveyed some informative details, but the description was lacking vivid, dynamic and realistic pictures. Readers should feel they have seen the location, so the following sample is somewhat lacking:

Crocodile Rock is separated into two big rooms. Both of these rooms are covered in subtle neon lightening, which adds a nice contrast to the otherwise dim atmosphere. But unlike a lot of piano bars, the Crocodile Rock is not so dark that can't see the person next to you—it has a perfect orchestra of colors. In addition, strobe lights are flashed in certain corners of the bar to help get the excitement going.

In Article 4, he also relied too heavily on telling rather than showing. The result is a flat description of the person being interviewed. He missed the opportunity to make his subject “come alive” because he did not incorporate her voice. Instead, he told the reader what she said:

She also believes that her degree has helped her become more competitive in the work force. She says that even in professional settings, it is surprising how many people do not actually know how to write well. Because of her English Writing major, she does know how to write well, and she does have an advantage over her peers.

From these examples, we see that Rob did not realize a change in conceptualization despite such promising opportunity. This does, however, coincide with what one would expect considering his status as one who experienced negative change in terms of achievement and ranked achievement.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

These brief case studies raise the question about what it means to learn. Each of the students experienced positive aspects of change, despite how they were labeled from a performance standard. The issue then is really one of what kind of learning we should value most in the classroom: Skill-based Learning, Conceptual Awareness and Understanding, or Transformation. Additionally, the study raises questions about the benefits of service-learning and reflection. The model, which must adapt to fit the

particulars for each student, suggests that educators must acknowledge all of the fluctuations within and between conditions (not just service-learning and reflection) that elicit differing results for student. However, these and other concerns are best addressed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The task of this chapter becomes one of considering how the results might contribute to the fields of education, composition, and service-learning. I will begin by addressing how the original research questions need to be re-interpreted in light of questions raised as the model of findings emerged. These new questions more closely represent the model I constructed from the data and, as a result, are more adept at addressing the main issues raised within the study, an occurrence that is quite typical in qualitative research. In a final section, I consider implications of the study for theoretical, practical, and empirical issues.

### **Revisiting the Research Questions**

As can be the case in grounded theory studies, some of the original research questions directing the study's focus did not accurately reflect the findings that coalesced into the central phenomenon. This can occur because, as Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested, the research questions serve as guides to keep researchers appropriately directed during the data collection and analysis process. However, those who conduct this kind of research do not begin with certain preconceived theories in mind; "rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data" (p. 12). Because one of the goals of grounded theory is to build theory, it seems fitting then that the results may differ from one's predictions for them. This study was no exception. The original research questions guiding the study's focus shifted or became less consequential once the model was developed. These questions then gave rise to a new, more inclusive set of questions. Thus, the final set of research questions and a brief justification for their inclusion in the study need to be stated.

Question 1, *what are the factors that could facilitate or interfere with change in a course with an experiential learning focus?* Formerly Question 4, this revised question switches the original focus from the role of written reflection as a

transforming agent to the more general and representative discussion of each the conditions (of which reflection was one) that have an effect on a student's ability to experience change. The revised question makes reference to the model of *change in students over time* and hints at how each of the factors are capable of affecting the change students experienced and the effects of the change.

Question 2, *what is the impact and desirability of the different levels of change on student learning?* Within the levels of change that students might experience during the course of the semester, this new question addresses what students can learn from each level and how desirable the outcomes of the levels might be in different learning conditions.

Question 3, *what does it mean to be transformed in terms of the kind of learning that occurs?* As a follow up to Question 2, this new question addresses the learning students might encounter specifically at the Transformative level.

Question 4, *how might transformation appear when it occurs, or how can we deduce the presence of transformation in students' writing by analyzing students' formal written reports as well as their responses in journals, interviews, and questionnaires?* Originally Question 1, this question remains in essence as it was initially stated. It discusses how one can detect transformation within student texts. The only revision I found I needed to make was to drop the reference to *change in a service-learning course* as the course I observed seemed to be more of an experiential learning course than a true instance of a service-learning course.

Question 5, *how does reflection facilitate learning?* This new question explores what about the actual process of reflection is influential in generating the learning that students experience within a course.

Question 6, *how do the reflective writing assignments influence students' views of the world, of their learning and/or knowledge, and of themselves as writers?* Originally Question 2, this slightly revised question is a follow-up to Question 5 in that it addresses how the writing assignments that were used as reflection activities in the course served to facilitate students' learning and their writing knowledge. This

question, along with Question 7, became less of a focus than originally intended, yet its focus remains an important part of the final results.

Question 7, *how does metawriting influence students' understanding of texts and their ability to produce it?* Originally Question 3, this question probes deeper into the transforming abilities of reflection by considering the role of writing about writing as an agent of change.

Question 8, *as an example of a course that attempted to incorporate service-learning but more closely implemented experiential learning, what was the potential impact of the course on the change students were or were not able to realize?* The final question considers the importance of context on the change students experienced and examines the significance of the kind of activities in which the students were involved.

The answer to this and each of the previous questions and their implications are the subject of the subsequent discussion.

### ***Question 1***

*What are the factors that could facilitate or interfere with change in a course with an experiential focus?*

The most important outcome of this study was a conceptualization of the role of the factors and the interaction among them as agents of change summarized as a model for *change in students over time* to show how the factors act as conditions that influence the change students experience and the effects of the change.

For a student to experience change during a semester, several conditions need to be in place. These conditions represent either factors that are associated with the individual learner (*individually-based conditions*) or factors that are basic components of the structure for the course in which students are enrolled (*course-based conditions*). Along with the variety and type of *instructional activities* used, the nature and specifications of the *assignments*, the amount, frequency, and type of *mentoring* a student receives, the *time* allotted for text preparation, the inclusion of *service-learning* in the course, the amount and nature of *reflection* compose the list

that I saw in these data of course-based conditions that affect a student's potential for change. Likewise, the degree of *motivation/incentives* inherent within students or the assignment, students' *interest* in the course or the material, their *perceptions of the professor* as an expert or as support, the amount and type of *experience/ability* students possessed, the amount of *writing self-efficacy* they had, and the amount of *practice* they engaged in comprised the list of individually-based conditions responsible for change.

Within the model, these conditions worked together to create an atmosphere for change, yet they affected students differently. Some students seemed to have enough drive or experience to compensate for problems within the structure of the course. Similarly, a rewarding and authentic assignment when coupled with reflection to help students see what they have learned during the experience can overcome writing hesitations, low writing ability, or other personal factors that could potentially inhibit a student's learning. Thus, it is the relationship among conditions that stimulates the potential for change within a learning environment.

The nature of change students experienced also differed depending on how these conditions intersect. Students seemed to achieve *Skill-based Learning*, thereby enhancing their procedural knowledge for basic writing concepts, *Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension*, an understanding of how the concepts function within and apply to the genre of interest, and *Transformation*, or realizations about global writing concepts, heightened perceptions of self, and diversified opinions of society and culture. (Each term is discussed in more detail in the following questions.) I saw these aspects of change as existing in a hierarchical structure, with each level building on the other. Students must possess the know-how for basic skills and concepts before they can learn to apply them to different contexts. Furthermore, Transformation would not be possible without a conceptual and procedural premise on which to stand. As the highest level, Transformation is also the most infrequently occurring and is often not generated in a course because an enhanced perspective of self and others may not be desired and because of a missed opportunity to emphasize

the necessary critical thinking element, the result of encounters with the appropriate conditions (motivation to participate, the nature of assignments, amount of reflection, etc.) Nevertheless, each change is possible for students depending on how the conditions influenced them.

The change students encounter during a semester then manifests itself into one of two potential effects of change. The first, the *effects of change within students*, can produce changes in *mastery of skills* (ability to perform basic skills associated with the course), *mastery of genre* (increased awareness of concepts associated with the genre of writing), *mastery of process* (improved understanding of the writing process), *enhanced integration* (heightened critical consciousness about self, writing, or others), *confidence* (greater belief in one's ability to write), and *personal insight* (intimate realizations about one's aspirations, preferences, and abilities). The second potential result, known as *effects of change within student texts*, can occur within students' *achievement*, or performance capabilities, *ranked achievement*, or performance comparative to that of their peers, and *conceptualization*, the ability to present enhanced integration in text. These effects, all of which are desirable, represent a student's potential change and as such are a measure of how they did change, if at all.

Thus, several conditions of change seemed either to facilitate or interfere with the possibility of Transformation and the other kinds of change as determined by the effects of change a student experienced. Yet these conditions seemed also to influence Skill-based Learning and Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension. Thus, each level of change has the potential to be influenced by each of the conditions.

### ***Question 2***

*What is the impact and desirability of the different levels of change on student learning?*

The results of the study indicated that there were three levels of change that the students experienced in the semester. The first, Skill-based Learning applied to the realization of certain skills, writing practices, or other "how to" developments. The

change at this level resembled more procedural based (Anderson, 1983) changes, the kind that would benefit from practice (Pressley & McCormick, 1995), or being able to perform well the components of the Flower and Hayes (1984) writing model: planning, translating, and reviewing. The next level, Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension stimulated an understanding of the skills, the process needed to produce those skills, and the realization of how those skills should be used in other contexts. Change at this level resembled what Schumacher and Nash (1991) considered the outcome of the active manipulation of ideas, the creation of comprehension, or what Elbow (1991) believed to be the crucial training for life beyond college. Both of these first two levels represent common goals for the classroom—teachers want their students to learn information, to understand the information they have learned, and to internalize the process they have endured to produce the learning. The results can then be transferred to different settings.

The final level of Transformation produces learning or change in students that approaches the “whole-hearted learning” Dewey discussed in 1938. It also accounts for the enhanced perspectives of society, culture, and one’s self talked about by Flower (1989), Gere and Sinor, (1997), Peck et al. (1995), and Schutz and Gere (1998). Furthermore, throughout this dissertation, I have been referring to the effects of transformation as “profound” because the resulting change occurs at a level beyond the cognitive. Cognition is certainly included because students not only learn how to do something and understand how to do something, they also learn how to apply the knowledge to future contexts, how the knowledge fits into the bigger picture, and why they are better off knowing this information. More importantly, transformation influences students’ motivation to learn, beliefs about learning, confidence in their abilities, and behavior toward learning. The results suggest that the learned material, which will benefit from the deeper discovery of concepts and relationships, will be more memorable and more deeply processed, and the students will be more confident in their writing abilities because of its more inclusive impact, similar to what Hilgers et al. (1999) and Kelly (1995) found in their studies.



But what does it mean to learn at the Transformative level? Take for example a hypothetical student who has been struggling with the concept of transitions. He knows what transitions are and how they function (Skill-based Learning), and he understands their basic purpose and impact within the text (Conceptual Awareness and Comprehension), but he has been unable to produce them effectively and consistently, although he performs well enough to “get by.” Because of his struggles, this student doubts his abilities and hesitates when approaching the task of writing. He might even perceive writing as less important to his future in order to minimize his concerns towards writing. He has also probably met his goals and those his professors had for their courses up to this point because he knows how to write and can perform what is asked of him. Yet something is missing.

Then, the student experiences a breakthrough in his understanding and finally realizes what it means to produce effective transitions. The moment occurs as an epiphany and generates a level of excitement that he has not yet known during his previous struggles. Suddenly, he is enthusiastic about his writing because he is able to see the immediate stylistic effects on his text. He perceives his writing abilities differently because he feels more capable and may even produce more desirable performance effects. He now looks forward to future writing opportunities, or he at least experiences less hesitation when approaching the task. The results of the transformation affect his knowledge as well as his attitude, perceptions of self, writing self-efficacy, motivation, and emotions, and are, therefore, more intense. He will remember the transformative change he realized more readily than he will the first moment he learned about transitions because the results had a greater impact on him. The transformation could occur in history, chemistry, calculus or any other subject and the results would be similar. This account describes the change students such as Laura and Pedro (despite his lack of change in performance) were able to experience during the course of the semester.

Just because the effects of Transformation are more profound does not mean they are desirable in all settings. For some educators, it is enough for students to learn at

the first two levels. The goals for the course do not require such dramatic results. However, for educators who want the learning to have a lasting impression on the students because of the nature of the subject or its potential uses for students, then Transformation would be an admirable pursuit. Additionally, those incorporating experiential learning or service-learning in their courses would desire this outcome as integrative learning is the goal of the pedagogies. Thus, the levels serve as a means for helping students and educators assess, direct, and realize their class goals in an effort to answer what is a “good enough” outcome.

### ***Question 3***

*How might transformation appear when it occurs, or how can we deduce the presence of transformation in students’ writing by analyzing students’ formal written reports as well as their responses in journals, interviews, and questionnaires?*

Recall that what became evident in my interpretation of the data was the importance of the idea of change in students both in terms of the influences that led to change and effects of this change. Inherent within this notion was the concept of transformation as it represented one level of possible change. The answer then to how transformative learning might appear when it occurs is that it depends on one’s definition of the term. The results of the study indicate that there was some discrepancy in the participants’ responses as to whether transformation was synonymous with improvement. If one believes that to be transformed is to improve, then transformation might look similar to the advances students often make during the course of the semester: increased knowledge, greater understanding and use of key concepts, better self-evaluation skills, etc. In terms of writing improvements, students would exhibit better grammar and sentence structure, enhanced ability to express ideas and thoughts on paper, and portray more complex reasoning, organizational, and presentational skills. The result would be a more fluid, polished, and sophisticated text with clearer relationships (Beck et al., 1995) and ample, purposeful supporting evidence (Smagorinsky, 1991), a greater focus on perspectives other than

one's own (Gere & Sinor, 1997; Schutz & Gere, 1998), and a heightened sense of voice and personal identity (Bruning & Horn, 2000).

Certainly, transformation should produce these kinds of outcomes regardless of one's definition because transformed students would also improve. However, simply because a student improves does not mean that he or she is also transformed. The definition offered in and supported by this study suggests that transformation goes beyond the cognitive aspects of learning to encompass additional aspects of the individual:

Transformation is the result of a self-reflexive process through which an individual re-conceptualizes his or her emotional, intellectual, behavioral, motivational, and/or spiritual perceptions. The process can either occur suddenly if the self-reflection produces an epiphany, or gradually as with a deeper awakening that occurs over time. To be transformed means to experience an increased or new awareness about a global or more personal matter, whether the subject of the realization is a person, an issue, a theory, etc.

Just as learning can encompass realms beyond the cognitive, transformation seems often to intersect with more than simply conceptual content, in that a person's attitude, behavior, thoughts, feelings, incentives, and beliefs may also be altered by the change.

Therefore, *when* transformation occurs seems to have an impact on what students think they have learned (the effects of change within students) and what is written in their final written product (the effects of change within text). Yet the outcome extends beyond textual advances and beliefs about the advances to incorporate changes in attitude, behavior, motivation, and/or emotions towards the text or its content. Often those who experienced what they believed to be transformation in the study spoke of how it helped them learn something about themselves, not just how it influenced their knowledge of the course's material. They felt they had learned to approach the text differently, present their subject in a more effective and profound way, and construct

more vivid, dynamic language to produce the final text. As with the “ah-ha” moment, the realization that these outcomes had occurred created much enthusiasm and pride. And as a result, they seemed to enjoy writing more and they felt better about the outcomes, giving them what Klinger (1977) would call greater incentives to pursue writing as a goal and greater expectations that they could accomplish the task. Thus, the transformation seemingly influenced their beliefs, attitude, and emotions in addition to their knowledge.

The effects within a student’s text seemed to depict deeper analytical abilities, more adept use of language, greater inclusion of information that connects the content to the world outside academia or at least includes more of the information readers care about, an enhanced sense of personal style and the ability to convey it in text, and a greater command of the techniques that make professional writers universally accepted as “good,” thereby adhering to each of the proposed ideas for what the text may look like in Chapter 2. Additionally, the end result is often more excitement and vitality in the writing than the more flat pre-transformative writing. The outcomes often sound like those that would be associated with general improvements but differences, although subtle, exist within the text. For example, Jane showed evidence of improvement in that she presented greater mastery over the skills and concepts connected to magazine writing. Yet she did not change the way in which she presented the material. She was able to mimic successfully the writing of professionals to a certain degree but there was still a sense that she was attempting to produce something that was “good enough” to receive her desired grade and not something that would challenge her stylistic preferences or her comfort with a certain subject matter. If she had been truly transformed, the reader would recognize her text as a great piece of writing rather than observing that she did well on this assignment. Transformation would bring her one huge step closer to being the kind of writer she always wanted to be: one who makes a difference.

Andres, on the other hand, did experience transformation. He did not improve his class standing or his performance because he continued to make mistakes

(grammatical, etc.) that lowered his grade but he was able to create a more dynamic and complex final product by the end of the semester. The outcome presented the subject of his article with more detail, more description, a greater sense of her voice and who she was as a person, and a greater commitment to creating her portrayal as justly and as accurately as possible. One came away with the impression from reading his final article that he truly cared for his interviewee and that he tried to convey those characteristics he enjoyed on the page. Consequently, he experienced a shift in attitude and behavior (he tried harder) in addition to presenting a better final product. If he had not had such a false sense of his linguistic and semantic ability, he might have “improved” his performance scores as well. Thus, I saw that transformation occurs as both a change in students’ text and a shift in the way they feel towards, approach, or produce the text.

My discussion so far has also indirectly addressed the second part of the question, namely how can we deduce the presence of transformation in students’ writing by analyzing students’ formal written reports as well as their responses in journals, interviews, and questionnaires. A more direct answer to this question takes two parts. First, transformation was evident in the students’ reflection activities (journals, interviews, and questionnaires) through their reports of what they had learned. Students often mentioned the learning as the realization of a concept they had often struggled with and were happy finally to comprehend. When a student prefaced remarks with “I never realized that before” or “You know I have always known that but I have never really *known* that until now,” it was clear that the learning outcome had had some significant impact on the student, signifying an epiphany. One can also see evidence of transformation in the reflection activities by identifying the kind of outcomes students reported as transformative. Generally, any sort of effect dealing with a difficult to achieve concept or that contributed to a greater understanding of their text, the production of their text, or the impact of the text on the reader signified a transformative experience. Also, as the teacher of the course indicated, transformed students would present a greater awareness of self, whether through increased

confidence or enhanced association with their own sense of style/voice. Thus, if students did not state their transformative experiences outright, these could be inferred from the nature of the learning outcomes they reported.

Second, transformation can be detected in the students' text through a holistic examination of several textual examples. It is not enough to assess one piece of text because we need to have a benchmark for that student: what were her initial abilities, stylistic preferences, strategies, etc., and what choices did she tend to make concerning or within the text. This standard could then be compared to another sample to detect any changes. However, the assessment should be holistic because, as previously mentioned, transformation was shown to represent a global shift that was only be decipherable through an understanding of the piece as a whole rather than its components. The components are an important addition to the general picture but the gist of what has happened to the writer is best detected by examining the text in its entirety.

#### ***Question 4***

*What does it mean to be transformed in terms of the kind of learning that occurs?*

Question 3 defined what is meant by transformation, so this question furthers the concept by asking what transformation might look like in terms of student learning. The results of the study revealed that students both reported being transformed (enhanced integration) and showed textual evidence of being transformed (conceptualization). Thus, the question becomes one of identifying what is the relationship between these two different forms of transformation. Again, the results revealed that some students appeared to be transformed in their perceptions of learning (enhanced integration) and in their text (conceptualization). It, therefore, seemed strange that a student might experience enhanced integration without experiencing conceptualization or vice versa. The issue is difficult to discuss because it is similar to asking whether performance scores equal true evidence of learning. Certainly it is possible that students learn but are unable to provide ample evidence of

their learning. Reciprocally, students may perform well without having recently learned because they already know the material being assessed.

The relationship between enhanced integration and conceptualization works the same way. Both forms of transformative learning represent different aspects of a student's ability to be transformed. Those who realized enhanced integration experienced a change in their perceptions, emotions, motivation, cognition, and potentially their beliefs similar to the learning described by Cranton (1994), Mentkowski and associates (2000), and Eyler and Giles, Jr. (1999). This did not mean, however, that they were necessarily able to show evidence of this transformation within text, otherwise known as conceptualization. Jane and Rob, for example, were not able to produce the effect of conceptualization despite the positive changes in their enhanced integration because they may not have had much room for improvement in their writing and because they may not have been willing enough (referring to Jane's lack of interest and motivation) or able (referring to Rob's struggles with the assignments) to apply what they had learned within their text. Jane may have adopted a "this will be good enough" attitude while Rob may have missed recognizing what was expected of him in the assignments.

Conversely, Andres did not show much evidence of enhanced integration despite his positive change in conceptualization because his writing presence afforded him the opportunity to improve his style, presentation, and complexity. He seemed to enjoy the work and he found great incentives for writing the articles, two factors that helped him produce a more developed text, but he was not able to process how or why he was changing textually. The change was occurring without registering in ways other than confidence and skill-based achievements.

There could be several other possible explanations for why students fail to show evidence of their learning (not feeling well, misinterpretations, fear of testing/writing, etc.). However, truly understanding the discrepancy between enhanced integration and conceptualization should be the subject of future studies. The results would help practitioners recognize the best conditions for facilitating transformation in students.

Suffice it to say within the context of this question that to be transformed meant to experience transformation or to show evidence of being transformed. A combination of both possibilities was also an option but not a necessary requirement. To feel transformed and to prove one was transformed both count as legitimate experiences.

### ***Question 5***

#### *How does reflection facilitate learning?*

One of the issues previously alluded to but not directly stated is the discovery of what in the connection between service and learning is so meaningful for students. Jacoby (1996) claimed that reflection facilitated learning but no one has adequately expressed how this learning occurs. The results of the study suggested how reflection might facilitate change. The model I developed indicated that reflection was one of the conditions that influenced change in students but this question really goes beyond that into a deeper consideration of how the change is made possible. Because reflection in the form of journal entries, questionnaires, and interviews was one of the main tools for gathering information in the study and because the study illustrated several learning outcomes, then it is possible to suggest that reflection allowed the students to identify and in some cases realize what they were learning in the class. Students reported that talking or writing about their experiences, their writing, and their increased understanding helped them to become aware of the learning they encountered. Pressley et. al (1987) would say this learning is the result of elaborative interrogation, or why-questioning, that helped students activate prior knowledge related to the to-be-learned information, thereby rendering the material more meaningful and memorable.

Would it be possible for that learning to occur without reflection? Possibly. However, the learning becomes more salient and more profound when students are asked to think about it in this manner. During the process of writing or speaking the learning is created (Flower, 1989; Kelly, 1995; Kucer, 1985; Nystrand, 1982; Odell, 1980; Schallert, 1987; Schumacher & Nash, 1991; Spivey, 1990; Squire, 1983; Sternglass, 1993; Tierney & Pearson, 1983; van Nostrand, 1979). Deithloff (2001)



confirmed this concept when several of the study's participants indicated that they did not realize all they had learned until they participated in an interview with her. This was true even though they did not reflect until the semester after the class that stimulated the learning was completed. Additionally, none of what was discovered about the effects of change within students would have been possible without the reflection activities. It is possible that the effects would have occurred without the activities but the students were definitely more cognizant of the effects because of their participation in the activities.

Because of the effects of reflection, we must then also consider what can be done to make reflection as beneficial to the students as possible. To accomplish this goal, practitioners should carefully consider each of the factors mentioned in the section on implications to guarantee that the reflection helps rather than hinders the students. The essential point of each of the factors is to match the assignment with the reflection and to make reflection enjoyable or thought provoking for the students rather than forced. Without conscious reflection implementation, students can have negative reactions and be less willing to participate in reflection, thereby inhibiting their opportunity to make the necessary connections to learning (Eyler et al., 1996).

### ***Question 6***

*How do the reflective writing assignments influence students' views of the world, of their learning and/or knowledge, and of themselves as writers?*

The data supporting this question implicated reflection as a tool or condition that helped students learn, whether that "change" occurred about the world, their knowledge, or themselves. As indicated in the literature from the field of service-learning, reflection is the piece that connects the service intended to facilitate learning with the classroom learning and its goals (Anson, 1997; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jacoby, 1996; Radest, 1993; Rhodes, 1997). The results confirmed this belief because the students were able to learn more through the process of reflection. The teacher of the course expressed the benefits of reflection as they applied to students' writing improvements:

I think that the questions that ask them to really think about their writing, what goes into their writing and what changed in this article as opposed to the previous article, those kinds of things are making them think about their writing choices and their writing process in a much more conscious manner than they are used to. Most are just like, “The paper is due in three days. Sit down and write it.” The fact that they are asked to reflect on that process and what goes into it, I think probably in many cases makes them more conscious as they sit down and are drafting the next one.

Thus, reflection helped the students make the necessary connections that would lead to a greater understanding of and about their writing. This finding adheres to the recommendations made by Schutz and Gere (1998) who suggested that students could connect experience with service-learning in their composition courses by keeping journals. However, because the projects within the study were more experientially based rather than service based, the benefits of reflection occurred as a result of the connection between the experience of writing for “real” magazines and the learning in the classroom, not because of a performed service.

Additionally, students mentioned reflection as one of several conditions that helped them realize the changes they experienced during the semester rather than as the sole contributor. This did not mean that reflection was any less important than previously considered. Just because the students did not directly implicate reflection in every reference to their learning did not mean they were not reaping its benefits. By participating in the reflection activities, the students seemed to be learning from reflection in subtle or internalized ways.

What seemed clear from the study was that reflection was an important condition for the change that occurred in many students. Reflection gave them the opportunity to think about what they were learning and how it applied to them personally. Students often mentioned that they would not have made certain connections without being prompted. As Paula, the teacher, indicated, it made their learning more conscious and more salient for them. However, there also seemed to be an interesting relationship between students’ personal preferences for journaling and their reaction

to the structured journal responses associated with the class. Some students found the specific questions to be too limiting while others seemed to enjoy the focus provided by the questions. At any rate, educators should consider varying between open-ended and more structured journal entries to account for these preferences. The goal is not to cater entirely to students' likings but to give them the most opportunity to benefit from the activities despite their personal inclinations.

### ***Question 7***

*How does metawriting influence students' understanding of text and their ability to produce it?*

A more specific form of reflection, metawriting asks students to write about their writing. Much of the reflection used in the classroom was metawriting because the journal prompts and the questionnaires asked students to write about their writing. One of the reasons for employing this method of reflection was because of the belief that writers construct meaning while composing. Known as epistemic writing, researchers who have explored this concept have endorsed the idea that, through writing, individuals can understand more than they did before writing (Nystrand, 1982; Schallert, 1987; Schumacher & Nash, 1991; Spivey, 1990; Squire, 1983; Tierney & Pearson, 1983). Additionally, as Yancey (1998) proposed, writers not only realize what they are learning by writing but they reveal what they are learning as they write.

Because metawriting is a more specified form of reflection, students were able to experience many of the same realizations about themselves, their world, and their writing through this reflection activity. Most of the reflection tools, with the exception of Journal Entries 3 and 5 (see Appendix B) and the interviews, were examples of metawriting, suggesting that the outcomes mentioned in Question 2, which directly apply to students' understanding of their text, are the result of the students being engaged in writing about their writing as opposed to other reflection methods. The more in tune they were with their process, the better decisions they were able to make when approaching the task of textual production and the more

aware they were of what made a piece successful. Thus, examples of the students' metawriting indicated that it helped students learn more about themselves as writers by giving them the occasion to reflect on their processes and the consequences of the textual decisions they make. As indicated, most of what was discovered in this study about the effects of change within students came from metawriting, although these self-report methods may not be entirely convincing to professors (Steinke & Buresh, 2002). Yet, without this specified form of reflection, little would be known about the students' perceptions of their learning. Metawriting also helped students learn about writing by giving them ample opportunity to engage in the task.

Much of this reasoning came from observation of the students, their reflection pieces, and their final texts. One could see the benefits of metawriting in the discussions produced during reflection and in the textual outcomes of students who were more aware of their writing. When asked about metawriting directly, however, students were less inclined to discuss exactly how they benefited from the activity, although a majority did feel they received benefits. There were a few memorable examples of students discussing how writing about writing helped them gain insight into their process, certain writing preferences, outcomes of experimentation, stylistic improvements, and many other important changes. Therefore, although metawriting served as the vehicle through which students identified so many impressive learning outcomes, they did not vocalize how this form of reflection enabled those realizations. If one's goal is to learn more specifically about metawriting, then the reflection activities need to be more direct in their questioning.

### ***Question 8***

*As an example of a course that attempted to incorporate service-learning but more closely implemented experiential learning, what was the potential impact of the course on the change students were or were not able to realize?*

In the results section, I stated that the projects implemented in the semester were not true examples of service-learning despite their good intentions. It seemed that because students never ventured outside the university community to perform their

“service,” they failed to realize how their efforts were benefiting the greater good. Some of the students did feel their work was “mutually beneficial,” but only to those associated with the university who were not perceived as having “true” needs. If the students had been able to identify “real” clients with legitimate needs (helping the homeless, running a food drive, raising money for breast cancer awareness, etc.), then they would have had a greater opportunity to realize the civic-minded, social, and moral benefits so commonly referenced in research (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Conrad & Hedin, 1991; Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; Gray et al., 1996; Kendrick, 1996; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Myers-Lipton, 1994, 1996; Parker-Gwin, 1996; Sax & Astin, 1997). Furthermore, students were not able to gain “ideas about how old conceptions and new information fit together to explain the world” (Eyler & Gyles, Jr., 1999, p. 195) because they did not have the chance to experience the world outside of the university community. They may have been able to realize these outcomes but it would not have been because of the assignments. Factors such as past service-learning experience or certain socially aware sensitivities would have to compensate for the lack of focus on service within the class or the assignments.

The issue then becomes what is lost if the projects are more representative of experiential learning rather than true service-learning. Recall that experiential learning is an applied form of education in which students learn by doing. Service-learning is an extension of that pedagogy in which students learn by performing a service for the community (Jacoby, 1996). In both settings, students experience intellectual, social, personal, civic, moral, and vocational developments (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Perry, 1970) but the focus in learning through service is the more conscious effort to develop the civic-minded or socially aware aspects in addition to the cognitive element. Without this focus, students can miss the emphasis and fail to make inferences about the world around them. Yet they still benefit from an experience that not only increases their knowledge but also allows them to use the knowledge in a realistic setting, thereby stimulating aspects beyond cognitive development.

Essentially, then, whether or not the students in the study were affected by the fact that their assignments were not service-learning depended on how central the idea of service was to the professor's goals for the course. What were the students expected to learn? One should recall that Paula's goals addressed the students' personal improvement, course-based skill improvement, and career building. She generally wanted them "to become familiar with the basics of magazine writing: cover letters, query letters, working with editors, adjusting [their] style to the publication, analyzing a publication, how magazine writing is different from other forms of writing, interview and research components of magazine writing" (first interview). As she made no mention of any service-related outcomes, it is not surprising that the students did not realize the particular benefits promised with service-learning. What they did learn about themselves and their writing (detailed in Chapter 4) was based on the real experience Paula hoped they would achieve. Therefore, it appears that the students did not miss out on any learning opportunities by not participating in a true service activity.

However, the goal of the university in the study was to incorporate service and the benefits of service in every course. In this case, the fact that the students did not truly participate in service-learning is a problem the professor must overcome before she teaches the course again. It is also possible that the students would have realized different or even more desirable effects if the assignments had been implemented in true service-learning form, although it is difficult to make these assumptions without the proper support. What can be said is that both the students and the professor seemed to feel some piece was missing but this did not seem to compromise the students' potential for change.

Another question related to the difficulty the professor had in creating the service-learning opportunity is how challenging is it to implement service-learning in the classroom. Is the concept one that exists more at a theoretical level rather than a practical one? The answer to this question is no. Service-learning can be implemented in the classroom if one pays special attention to the design of the assignments and

how the results then comply with the original goals for the project. Paula wanted her students to gain practical, real-world knowledge about what it means to write for a magazine. They received this education. If, however, she had also wanted them to achieve an enhanced social perspective, she should have designed the assignments differently. For example, she could have asked students to go into the community and perform a service activity. Then on the assignment, students could have written an article for a local magazine about the experience. The purpose of the piece would have been to persuade others to get involved or simply to inform readers about their community and the people within it. This assignment would allow the students to gain practical experience while they were introduced to true service issues. Deans (2000) would classify this activity as writing about the community. Students would definitely come away from the encounter with new social knowledge (positive, negative, or neutral) because they would have worked within a world outside the university.

However, in the context of the course I observed, service-learning proved too difficult for the professor to implement. My own personal experience and others' writings about service-learning indicate that it is more work for the professor in terms of providing additional support for students, supervising the community work, being conscious of liability, constructing appropriate means of reflection, structuring the assignment so that it is mutually beneficial rather than self-serving, and so on. (Eyler & Giles, Jr., 1999; Jacoby, 1996; Rhodes, 1997; Zlotkowski, 1998). The answer is itself another dissertation. Suffice it to say that it is both more challenging and more rewarding if one's goals are truly in line with the pedagogy of service-learning.

In the end, whether the students experienced service-learning or experiential learning was not as important as the fact that they had the opportunity to write in an applied context. Haswell (2000) suggested in his quantitative assessment of change in students' texts that it is important to see how context, specifically "different rhetorical tasks and genres, composing processes and pressures, target audiences" (p. 337), affects growth in student writing because "how writers vary their writing in response to different contexts is part of writing change"(p. 337). The findings of this study

respond to that call in that they illustrate how context becomes an influence on a student's potential for change. It becomes a means for students' ability to recognize changes in themselves and to produce changes in their text in addition to its role as a motivational incentive and a vehicle for creating realistic assignments.

### **Implications**

The results of the study have applications to several areas of research. Thus, the following synopsis will sequentially speak to the matters that would be of interest in each.

#### ***Ways of Learning***

One of the first contributions the study makes to an exploration of learning is that it reopens the discussion about what it means truly to learn. Yet the results go beyond the realm of surface versus deep learning (Marton & Säljö, 1976) because it suggested that the deep-surface dichotomy is not inclusive enough. Change, as it occurred in this study, represented a continuum of outcomes, each related to the next and desirable under certain conditions. Similar to the conclusions developed by other learning researchers (see Chapter 2), the results help educators understand how their students are learning and what facilitates that learning. As practitioners in the business of education, this is an important goal.

In addition to the contributions on how students learn, the results, particularly those dealing with the levels of change students experience during a semester, imply the appropriateness of stimulating different levels of learning depending on the goals of instruction. Despite its presence at the top of the hierarchical model, Transformation is not necessarily the proper goal in all instances. For that matter, neither is Skill-based Learning. Similar to constructing instructional objectives, educators should direct their instruction to the kind of learning outcomes they hope to produce. Bloom (1968) and other researchers have made analogous implications, so the concept is not new. What I hope the results stimulate is a greater need to use the



levels of change as a guide for the kind of instruction professors use in their classroom so that students can experience the desired outcomes.

The results also confirm some of the research in the field, specifically some of the conditions for learning. Some of the conditions pertain to the works of Vygotsky and Piaget in that these researchers recognized the importance of social interaction in development and knowledge that is best developed through student construction. The work of Bruning and Horn (2000), Corno (1989), Klinger (1977), Pintrich (2000), Rose (1985), Schunk (1991), and others all apply to the findings because they explain the possible stimulating or inhibiting agents, such as self-efficacy, volition, and writing anxiety, that can influence a student's potential for change.

Further implications can be made about the importance of distinguishing between forms of transformation. The study indicated that enhanced integration and conceptualization are two related but different learning outcomes that can occur in conjunction with or independently of each other. Just as it is crucial to understand how and why students experience learning but fail to show evidence of their achievements, it is important to understand that discrepancies in the two outcomes occur, and this does not mean that transformation did not occur. One's thoughts can be transformed without the outcome revealing the change.

Additionally, as a form of epistemic writing, the study generated some practical suggestions for the most appropriate ways to implement reflection within a course. These factors (listed below), which reflect general principles expressed elsewhere (Cranton, 1994; Eyler et al., 1996; Yancey, 1998), attempt to answer Schön's (1995) question, How do we do this better?

- *The effort students put into the reflection activities*—Paramount to the success of the reflection activities is how much thought students put into what is asked of them. If they do not take the activities seriously, then they will not make the necessary improvements in understanding.

- *How honest students are in the reflection activities*—This concept is also central to how much students learn from the activities. If they are not honest with themselves, then they will not realize as many benefits from participation in the activities.
- *How the professor implements service-learning in the course*—As a key component of service-learning, the success of the reflection activities is somewhat dependent on how salient the service aspect is for the students. The ability of the activities to connect service with learning is conditional on how much of a potential for connection there is to establish.
- *The kind of reflection questions asked*—As previously indicated, students respond differently to guided reflection versus open-ended reflection. Professors should consider the goals of the reflection activities, the abilities of students (freshman may not be able to reflect as effectively as seniors without guidance), and student preferences when considering what kind of questions to ask. Without these considerations, the results may not be very effective.
- *Student interests*—Students who enjoy writing are going to enjoy written reflection more than those who do not. Also, some students receive more benefit from classroom discussions than from written reflection.
- *Frequency of use*—The reflection activities can be cumbersome to the students if they are used too often. Additionally, students tend to reflect on more recent occurrences. Yet activities that are implemented too infrequently will not reflect their learning throughout the semester. Professors must strike a balance between these two extremes. For this class, nine journal entries would have been ideal if there had also not been questionnaires. This proved too much for some students, yet these results are specific to this course due to the already heavy demands the assignments placed on the students. One should carefully contemplate the context and the influence of other factors before making decisions about how often reflection activities are used in the course.

- *Amount of time between reflection activities*—If activities are too close together, they will not allow the students to produce new insights. Similarly, if they are too far apart, students will not have the opportunity to process all that is occurring to them.
- *Intensity of course load*—The reflection activities should not present an undue stress on students. If the assignments of the course are already taxing, one should limit the amount of activities used. Forced reflection is not beneficial.
- *Guidelines for the reflection activities (how long, how detailed, etc.)*—If the guidelines are unreasonable in any way, the reflection activities will not be effective. For determining what is unreasonable, one should consider factors such as time, goals of the activities, and other aspects of the course load.
- *The method of reflection assessment*—How honest students are in the reflection activities and how much effort they put into their responses depends on how fair they believe the professor's intentions are in "grading" reflection. Again, one must consider the goal of a reflection activity before determining the best means for giving students credit for their efforts.
- *Student endorsement of the reflection activities*—How the students feel about the perceived usefulness of the reflection activities and the questions within the activities affect how motivated they are to complete what is asked of them. If they do not feel the activities will help them, then they will not take them seriously, making their perceptions a reality. If, however, they believe in the purpose of the activities, then they will put the necessary effort into reflection.
- *Feedback students receive from the reflection activities*—Feedback tells the students how much those reviewing the reflection activities value what is being said. Students may not put as much effort or sincerity in the reflection if they do not feel that the information is being treated with the utmost concern and respect.

- *Perceptions of the professor*—How the students feel towards the professor who assesses the reflection activities also influences how honest they are and how much effort they put into reflection. The better they feel about the person and his or her intentions, the more apt they are to be forthright and the more open they are to the resulting change.
- *Personal factors associated with general motivation*—One factor that can influence many classroom activities is how committed students are to what they are doing. Health concerns, fatigue, more desirable activities, and other competing entities can affect how much time and energy students put into the reflection activities, which influences what they are able to realize from reflection.

Each of these factors has the ability to impact how beneficial the reflection activities are for students, and should therefore be duly considered before any attempts are made to implement reflection in the classroom.

The final implication relevant to meaning construction is the need to produce Dewey's notion of "whole-hearted" learning. Educational psychologists address and recognize motivation, emotion, beliefs, cognition, attitude, and behavior as components that contribute to learning but there is not as great an emphasis on teaching for a more synthesized final product. The need for this more holistic approach to learning is becoming apparent through studies such as this one. If we are truly to teach students, we must recognize all of the ways in which students learn or the result will be lacking in its impact.

### ***Writing Improvements***

Expanding on the idea of writing in context, this study implicates the need for students to write in the environment they are attempting to emulate. For example, it is best for students to learn about writing for magazines by actually writing for magazines. Hypothetical assignments do not create the same pressurized conditions or opportunities for real world feedback that contextual writing offers. This result

further confirms the distinction between writing for the academy and real world writing and encourages other educators to employ similar practices within their classrooms. The students in the study each mentioned having more visible learning achievements than they had yet known up to that point. Understanding how to write for an audience and then having really to write for the audience can be two separate things. Students often do not learn the concept until they must actually perform the task under realistic settings.

Additionally, the study makes an important discovery that it is possible to detect transformation in students' writing. By making holistic comparative assessments, educators can witness evidence of transformation as advances in style, perspective, presentation, and other desirable effects. This is an important realization because writing is, by nature, conducive to transformation due to its inherent creativity and the tendency to involve students with certain subjects that require facing significant but often difficult socially-charged issues with their innate affective considerations. By recognizing and helping students to produce transformative effects within their text, educators can help students become better, more approachable or universal writers.

Finally, the study reveals interesting accounts of student writing gains that would be desirable for those who teach writing. Through writing activities, students were able to generate insight into their own processes and writing endeavors. The students in the study were open, forthright, and informative in their responses, thus providing a glimpse into the issues writing students struggle with and the kind of goals they have. Acknowledging this information can help writing instructors address the issues that are important to their students and help them achieve their writing aspirations.

### ***Considerations for the Educational Environment***

The desired levels of change an educator identifies when considering goals for instruction has implications on the success of the educational environment of change because of the influential nature of the conditions on those levels. It is also important to understand how the conditions can work together to influence change. Of special importance are the course-based conditions because educators have control over these

variables. They design the instructional activities, reflection, and assignments. Whether or not service-learning is included within the class is also a decision to be made by the professor. How much mentoring students receive from their professors and peers and how much time they have to produce the assignments are also teacher controlled and are important because of their impact on student learning and motivation (Cranton, 1994; Penrose & Geisler, 1994; Pressley & McCormick, 1995). By recognizing the potential effects of these factors on learning, educators can address potential problems upfront and anticipate the other problems that will interact with the less controllable student-driven conditions. The existence of these conditions is also supported by Bruning and Horn's (2000) four factors that support student motivation, namely *nurturing functional beliefs about writing, fostering student engagement through authentic writing goals and contexts, providing a supportive context for writing, and creating a positive emotional environment* (see Chapter 2 for more details), each of which is controlled by the teacher and affects the more individualistic conditions.

The individually-based conditions, the factors that students bring with them to the classroom, often affect the effectiveness of the course-based conditions because each student responds differently and the responses can have either a positive or negative impact. For example, how much effort a student devotes to practicing can determine how well he or she performs on an assignment, with more practice often ensuring greater success. Ericson, Krampe, and Tesch-Römer (1993) identified practice and experience as the means by which performers become experts while Pressley and McCormick (1995) implicated the long-term effects of practice. This study confirmed the presence of these two variables in helping students become better writers by encouraging them to change in positive ways. Additionally, motivation/incentives and interest influence the students' desire to learn from or even participate in all aspects of the classroom. As Weimelt (2001) indicated, students have a need to recognize themselves as writers and to create purposeful and meaningful texts for real readers. Furthermore, risk taking (Clifford, 1991), exposure to cognitive conflict (Blatt &

Kohlberg, 1975; Kohlberg, 1969), attributional endorsements (Weiner, 1992), the particular volitional strategies a student employs (Corno, 1989), and interest in the subject matter (Hidi, 1990; Renninger, 1990; Renninger & Wozniak, 1985) all serve as potential motivational influences that can influence students' potential for change and their willingness to learn. Experience/ability and writing self-efficacy affect the students' attempts to approach the tasks, especially as these variables contribute to expectancy x value theory in which their perceptions of their abilities are said to influence their performance (Schunk, 1991). Student perceptions of the professor also affect how they view what is asked of them or the learning that results from participation.

By recognizing the potential role these conditions play in change, educators can account for the influence by varying instructive activities and assignments, preparing the students as much as possible, making them feel they have a voice in the learning they are encountering, and giving them ample opportunity for support. It is not beneficial to be overly concerned with meeting the students' needs but it is also not helpful to ignore them. If transformation, or any other level of learning, is to be successful, the environment must be conducive. Exactly how each practitioner accounts for these conditions is up to the specifics of the particular classroom. Generally speaking, however, each classroom's goal should be to implement the conditions in a way that creates the most advantageous atmosphere for change.

### ***Service-Learning***

Once a central focus of the study, service-learning was eventually relegated as a context that contributed to the change students encountered during the semester. One of the reasons for this shift in focus was because the concept became less important as the assignments shifted from a true service-learning to a more experiential nature. Yet helpful recommendations for instructional implementation, specific contributions to academic endeavors, and suggestions for how service-learning causes change can still be made about service-learning as a pedagogical concept.

First and foremost was the realization that reflection establishes the connection between service and learning by making the students conscious of what they are experiencing and asking them to make inferences about the experiences, thereby generating insight or learning. Much of what the students claimed they had learned was made possible by the reflection activities used in the study, suggesting that reflection is an effective method for assessing student learning, especially when student perspectives are of interest. Each of these points advances what was previously understood about reflection and contributes to a greater discussion on exactly how reflection creates the learning that occurs in service-learning, although much more research is needed in this area before the full implications of what is addressed here can be understood.

Other considerations raised from the study correspond with the importance of understanding how service-learning is to be used in the classroom before it is implemented. Practitioners who wish to employ service-learning should carefully consider their reasons for doing so and decide how best their intentions can be realized through the ensuing project. If a professor is not clear on how or why service-learning best fits the needs for her class, then more time and energy must be devoted to planning or the results may not be as meaningful for the students as they can be. The real danger of calling a project service-learning and not having it function as such in the classroom is that the concept may become diluted and confusing to students who think they are engaged in a service-learning project. Those without previous experience with the pedagogy then face the confusions of feeling they are learning about service but actually miss the service piece. If a greater sense of self-awareness and one's place within the community are not one of the learning goals, then one should question the appropriateness of implementing a service-learning project.



### **Suggestions for Future Research**

The above implications allude to particular as yet unresolved issues that would be of interest in future research. Here are some suggestions on how researchers can advance what was learned in this study according to the areas to which the questions correspond:

#### ***Ways of Learning***

Future studies could explore the direct effects of each level of learning on students to decipher which level produces what outcome and how educators can best use the levels to their benefit. Additionally, it would be beneficial to investigate further the idea of transformation in terms of the circumstances in which it is most desired, the direct causes of it, and why is it a preferred outcome of learning for those hoping to support a more holistic approach to student learning.

#### ***Writing Improvements***

A comparative analysis between students who experience transformative writing changes and those who do not might yield instrumental information about the potential impact on writing, whether or not real differences in textual quality can be determined, and what implications the resulting findings might have. Furthermore, an investigation into the long-term benefits of the results produced in the study could illuminate if the potential effects within students and within text are maintained over time and if they transfer to other aspects of the students' writing.

#### ***Considerations for the Educational Environment***

Future research might suggest practical ways of accounting for the course-based and individually-based conditions revealed in my model as well as any strategies and techniques that have been helpful in mitigating any potential negative effects on the classroom. Other studies might investigate the impact of each individual condition on change in students, including which conditions seem to have the biggest effect on student development and which are the most prevalent or easily instigated.

### *Service-Learning*

Finally, studies in the area of service-learning could address more quantitative assessments of classes that employ reflection and those that do not in an attempt to answer what is the difference in the change students experience or what else can be concluded about the contributions reflection makes towards learning. Although much research has been devoted to discovering the benefits and outcomes of both experiential learning and service-learning, additional investigations in this area are needed to determine whether or not the reported learning benefits can be attributed directly to either pedagogy. Without irrefutable proof, these fields will struggle with legitimacy until consistent results can prove why educators should engage in service-learning.

Each of these suggestions could potentially contribute to what has been a goal of this dissertation, to cultivate the opportunity to improve student learning by seeking to understand it, especially in a writing context. “And in learning they [students] are valuing the learning” (Paula, first interview), which has lifelong implications.

## APPENDIX A: Questionnaires

### Questionnaire 1

This is the first of four questionnaires that will help track any problems, concerns, or progress you may be having throughout the semester. The first cardinal rule with this and other questionnaires is: **BE HONEST**. Remember, these responses are your own and should reflect your true thoughts, so please do not censor them. We are not concerned with *how* you complete the questions, only *if* you complete them. Brown-nosing will only make this process dull for everyone involved, especially you. Happy writing!

Please type your answers to the following questions on a separate piece of paper and include it within your journal. You need to complete this first journal “entry” by Tuesday, January 22.

### Background information

What is your:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_ GPA \_\_\_\_\_

Past experience with service-learning \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for enrolling in this class \_\_\_\_\_

Is English your first language? If not, what is? \_\_\_\_\_

### The Questionnaire

1. How do you define the concept service-learning?
2. What are your impressions of classes that incorporate service-learning within the curriculum? Why do you feel this way?
3. What is reflection? What does it mean to participate in a reflective activity?
4. One goal of service-learning is to cause “transformation” in those who participate. What does the term transformation mean to you? How would you know if it has occurred (i.e., what might it look like in your life or in your writing)?
5. How would you describe your writing or your writing ability?
6. Why do you feel this way about your writing? (What experiences, past comments, successes/failures, etc. come to mind when you describe how you feel about your writing?)
7. How does the idea of sitting down to write make you feel? Think about the emotions you experience before, during, or after writing. What words would you use to describe this process?
8. How much do you value improvements in your writing (i.e., it’s really important, sort of important, not very important)? Indicate why you feel this way.
9. How do you envision yourself using writing in the future?

## Questionnaire 2

The following questions are based on your answers for the first 5 questions on Questionnaire 1. Although some sound similar to each other, they are not exactly the same. Please take your time with each question. Also, remember to be honest. These answers should reflect how you truly feel, not how you think you should feel.

For questions 1-16, identify which number you most identify with:

Not true of me   1   2   3   4   5   True of me

### Questions

1. I think service-learning will be beneficial for me.
2. The process of reflection, or “thinking about something you have done,” is beneficial for me personally.
3. One of my goals for this course is to be transformed (“changed”) by it.
4. I am comfortable with and/or encourage “change,” whether it occurs within me personally or within my academic work.
5. The act of writing is beneficial to me or my “personal growth/understanding.”
6. I see writing as an agent of “change.”
7. I think writing about my writing will help me “understand” or “grow.”
8. I think writing about my writing will help me “reconsider previous knowledge, beliefs, or feelings.”
9. I think it is possible for me to experience “a physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual change in my ideas, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, behavior,” or “manner of being” during a writing course.
10. If I am transformed this semester, I expect it will be evident in my writing.
11. I think writing about my writing will help me “improve as a person” or achieve “positive personal improvement.”
12. I think writing about my writing will “produce new insight,” “open my eyes,” or make me “aware of differences.”
13. I feel my writing will improve after a transformation.
14. I feel service-learning can produce transformation.
15. I believe reflection can produce transformation.
16. I feel being transformed is an important goal in service-learning.
17. For me, being transformed produces changes in my: (Circle all answers that apply.)  
Perceptions, Beliefs, Feelings, Attitudes, Knowledge, Behavior, “Manner of being,” Spirituality,  
Other: (Name or list.)
18. Rank the importance of these transformation byproducts as they relate to you: Perceptions, Beliefs, Feelings, Attitudes, Knowledge, Behavior, “Manner of being,” Spirituality, Other:
19. In your opinion, what causes transformation?
20. Assuming that transformation changes your writing in a positive way, what factors other than transformation can also improve your writing?

### Questionnaire 3

The following questions are based on your answers from previous questionnaires and from your journal entries. Although some sound similar to each other, they are not exactly the same. Please take your time with each question. Also, remember to be honest. These answers should reflect how you truly feel, not how you think you should feel.

For questions 1-15, identify which number you most identify with:

Not true of me   1   2   3   4   5   True of me

#### Questions

1. I value what I am learning in this class.
2. I think that magazine writing is different from the writing I have had to do previously as a writing major.
3. I find the process of learning to write for magazines difficult.
4. I am confident about what I have written so far this semester.
5. I am more comfortable writing magazine articles now than I was at the beginning of the semester.
6. I feel like it is possible for my writing to change because of a class.
7. I feel like my writing is changing as a result of this class.
8. The service-learning articles help me learn about writing for magazines.
9. The reflection components are helping me understand what is going on with my writing.
10. The reflection components are helping me understand what is going on with more personal issues in my life (my feelings, my views, etc.).
11. I value writing about my writing.
12. I enjoy talking with my peers about writing more than journaling about writing.
13. I feel like my writing has improved this semester.
14. I feel I have already been transformed this semester.
15. I will continue to pursue magazine writing after this class.
16. The following assignments have been helpful to me: (Circle all answers that apply.)  
The SEU Magazine Article, The Orientation Magazine Article, The Access Texas Magazine Article, The Alumni Magazine Article, Journal entries, Questionnaires
17. Rank the importance of these assignments in terms of how helpful they have been for you:  
The SEU Magazine Article, The Orientation Magazine Article, The Access Texas Magazine Article, The Alumni Magazine Article, Journal entries, Questionnaires
18. What specifically is helping you learn about magazine writing?
19. What specifically is helping you learn about your writing in general (doesn't have to relate to this class)?

### Questionnaire 4

This is the final questionnaire for this class. It is considered a text-based questionnaire because it asks you to consult the assignments you have written up to this point, especially the profile you just wrote. Remember the cardinal rule of questionnaires: **BE HONEST**. These responses are your own and should reflect your true thoughts, so please do not censor them. We are not concerned with *how* you complete the questions, only *if* you complete them. Brown-nosing will only make this process dull for everyone involved, especially you. Happy writing!

Please type the following information and questions on a separate piece of paper and include it within your journal. These questions are similar if not identical to the questions from the first questionnaire. You may feel differently about these questions now, so try to answer them according to your perspective right now. You need to complete this last journal “entry” by Thursday, May 2.

1. Based on your experience this semester, how would you now define the concept service-learning?
2. After working on a service-learning project, what are your impressions of classes that incorporate service-learning within the curriculum? Why do you feel this way?
3. How beneficial was the service-learning project you worked on this semester?
4. What is reflection? What does it mean to participate in a reflective activity? Why would someone want to reflect?
5. How did reflection impact your writing this semester (if at all)?
6. Remember that one goal of service-learning is to cause “transformation” in those who participate. What does the term transformation now mean to you?
7. Look at your first assignment for this semester. Now, look at your final assignment. What similarities do you see between the two texts in terms of your writing, your style, your approach, etc.? What differences do you see?
8. Why do you think these similarities and differences exist?
9. Do you think there is a difference between improvements in writing and actual transformation? Please explain your answer.
10. Can you see evidence of transformation in your writing from this semester? Please explain.
11. If the answer to question 10 is “yes”, to what do you attribute this transformation? If the answer is “no”, why do think you were unable to see transformation in your writing?
12. What conditions do you think must be in place for transformation to occur? Were they in place for this class? Why or why not?
13. After this semester, how would you now describe your writing or your writing ability? Why do you feel this way about your writing?

## APPENDIX B: Journal Entries

*Journal Entry 1:* Responses to Questionnaire 1

*Journal Entry 2:* Write about the process involved in crafting your [University name] Magazine Article. Why have you chosen the angle and topic you have, what sorts of challenges are you running into, what are you enjoying about this assignment, what are you learning about yourself and your writing?

*Journal Entry 3:* Pick one article from the Orientation magazine that you really like and discuss why you like it, why it is good, and pick one article that you think could be improved upon and discuss how and why. Be prepared to answer these questions during class as well.

*Journal Entry 4:* Compare and contrast writing the Orientation articles with the [University name] Magazine articles: what's different, what's similar, what seems to be more a challenge, less of a challenge?

*Journal Entry 5:* Respond to Ann McCutchan's visit: what did you learn, what surprised you, what dismayed you, what might you put to use in writing your next articles; if you went to her public reading as well, what was your response to that?

*Journal Entry 6:* Select one article we've read thus far from *Best American Magazine Writing* and analyze it in terms of what you like, what you learned about writing (style, interviews, research, leads/conclusions, quotes, etc.), what makes it a good article, what you might apply to your own writing.

*Journal Entry 7:* Why did you select the person you did for the Service Learning project profile? What expectations/fears do you have about the interview process? What sorts of questions do you want to ask your interviewee or do you think would be good general questions to ask? What do you consider to be the benefits of this project?

*Journal Entry 8:* How has the writing of a review (restaurant, band, club) been different or similar to the previous 2 articles you've written? What have you learned in this process of writing—about yourself, about writing, about magazine writing?

*Journal Entry 9:* Discuss your reaction to the service-learning project. What are you learning about profiles and interviewing? What are you finding difficult? What surprises you? What are you enjoying? How does writing this article compare to previous articles?

## APPENDIX C: GRE Writing Assessment Scale

### Sample holistic writing assessment scale, taken directly from <http://www.gre.org/descriptor.html>

The statements below, for each score level, describe the examinee's performance on the GRE Writing Assessment...Because the GRE Writing Assessment assesses "analytical writing," critical thinking skills (the ability to reason, marshal evidence to develop a position, and communicate complex ideas) weigh more heavily than the writer's control of fine points of grammar or the mechanics of writing (e.g., spelling).

#### **SCORE LEVELS 6 and 5.5**

Sustains extremely insightful, in-depth analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with logically compelling reasons and/or highly persuasive examples; is well focused and well organized; displays excellent use of language, with effective sentence variety and precise vocabulary; demonstrates superior facility with sentence structure, grammar, usage, and mechanics with few, if any, errors.

#### **SCORE LEVELS 5 and 4.5**

Provides generally insightful analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples; is generally focused and well organized; displays fluent use of language, with generally effective sentence variety and appropriate vocabulary; demonstrates good control of sentence structure, grammar, usage, and mechanics with few, if any, errors.

#### **SCORE LEVELS 4 and 3.5**

Provides competent analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with relevant reasons and/or examples; is adequately organized; displays sufficient control of language to convey meaning with reasonable clarity; demonstrates satisfactory control of sentence structure, grammar, usage, and mechanics, but may have occasional minor errors.

#### **SCORE LEVELS 3 and 2.5**

Displays some competence in analytical writing skills, although the writing is flawed in at least one of the following ways: limited analysis, development, or organization; weak control of language, sometimes resulting in vagueness or lack of clarity; or numerous errors in sentence structure, grammar, usage, or mechanics.

#### **SCORE LEVELS 2 and 1.5**

Displays serious weaknesses in analytical writing skills. The writing is seriously flawed in at least one of the following ways: lack of analysis, development, or organization; serious and frequent problems in the use of language; or numerous intrusive errors in sentence structure, grammar, usage, or mechanics—that is, errors that seriously interfere with meaning.

#### **SCORE LEVELS 1 and .5**

Displays fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing skills, resulting in incoherence. The writing is fundamentally flawed in at least one of the following ways: content that is confused



or mostly irrelevant to the assignments; little or no development; or severe and pervasive errors—that is, errors that result in incoherence.

**SCORE LEVEL 0**

The examinee's performance cannot be evaluated because the responses do not address any part of the assignments, are merely attempts to copy the assignments, are in a foreign language, or display only indecipherable text or no text whatsoever.

## APPENDIX D: Description of the Assignments

(From the course website)

### ***Article 1: The University Magazine Article***

This is a great opportunity to get published!

You will write a feature article (500-700 words), personal experience, about a unique, significant experience here at [the University] that reflects or embodies the University Mission Statement in some way. You will submit this article to the editor of *The University's Magazine*.

Possible topics include a service learning project, a class, an internship, a professor, a committee you've served on, a club or organization activity, something you've learned, experiences living in a residence hall, or experiences with cultural, religious and ethnic diversity. Carefully read the student-published articles I provide you with. Listen carefully to the editor when she visits our class.

Not all of you will have your work accepted by the editor for publication, but we're both hoping a significant number of you will. It is possible to write an article that receives an "A" or "B" from me but is not accepted by the editor because it isn't quite what she's looking for; it is also possible that your article will be accepted by the editor but receive a lower grade from me. The editor is willing to work with students through numerous drafts if she sees a promising article topic.

You will attach a cover letter with this assignment.

Remember both the editor and I are here to help you succeed!

This article is worth 5% of your grade.

### ***Article 2: Online Article***

You will be writing an article for the online orientation magazine that originated in the spring 2000 Magazine Writing course as a service learning project. This will be a continuation of that service learning project.

The Dean of Students will be our "publisher," will visit our class, and will have final say as to what articles are published. Everyone was published last year, so there's no reason why that won't happen again this year!

Your audience is primarily incoming freshman, but also transfer and international students, and parents. Research and interviews are required for this assignment.

Each of you will write one article for the magazine, or the equivalent of at least 600 words but no more than 800 words (so you may need to write two shorter articles depending on what topic you choose). You will also take pictures or provide pictures with your article (whether you obtain the pictures from your interviewee or take them yourself is up to you).

You will be provided with a list of assigned topics and email me as to what topic you've selected (articles assigned on a first-to-email basis; see calendar for deadline).

You will attach a cover letter with this assignment.

You will need to provide me with a short bio and a scanned photo to accompany your article (see calendar for this deadline).

This article(s) is worth 10% of your grade.

### ***Article 3: A Local Magazine Article***

This is a thrilling opportunity! The managing editor of *A Texas Magazine* approached me two years ago about having some of my students write for her magazine. She wants to publish student work. Her proposal evolved into having the entire spring 2000 Magazine Writing class writing for her. Over half the students in the class were published and some went on to write additional articles for the magazine.

The editor is willing to do this again for our spring 2002 Magazine Writing class! This year you all will be writing reviews. These assignments will make more sense after you've seen the publication, but you can choose from the following options, appropriate for the *A Texas Magazine* audience:

- One band review, which runs 3/4 page at 700-800 words
- One restaurant review, which runs 3/4 page at 700-800 words

The editor will visit our class and you'll be provided with copies of previously published student work.

A query letter will be written and attached to this assignment as well. Research is required for this assignment, and possibly an interview as well.

Again, not everyone will get published, but most of you should if you approach this with enthusiasm and professionalism. This is experiential learning at its best!

This article is worth 10% of your grade.

#### ***Article 4: Service Learning Project***

You will interview and then write a profile of an English Writing alumnus for a to-be-created online magazine (which the class will come up with a title for) on the Alumni page on the English Writing and Rhetoric webpage.

An email has been sent out to over 40 alumni who have graduated over the past 14 years, asking for their participation in this project. So far, I'm getting a very good response (remember, they all took Magazine Writing too, so they understand what you're going through!).

Your profile will be 700-900 words and probably involve several interviews, at least one of those by phone or in person (except in the case of overseas alumni). So some of you will be able to conduct your interviews in person, some by phone, and some by email or a combo of all three.

You will write a profile on one alumni and include a photograph (or photographs) of that person (you will also provide a bio of yourself and a picture that will be placed at the end of the article).

As a class, you will decide what the title of this magazine will be. I'll handle all the work of posting your articles online over the summer. So you'll be able to put this article on your resume!

The audience for this magazine is multiple: it's for alumni to catch up with what other alumni are doing now; it's for current ENGW majors to learn helpful tips about classes, the major, and possible career options; and it's for prospective ENGW majors to illustrate the rich possibilities of this degree (and it may be for parents of prospective and current ENGW majors to allay their fears that this degree won't help them get a "good" job).

As a class, we'll come up with the kinds of basic questions you want to ask each of the alumni. Then you'll need to think about specific questions particular to your individual interviewee. One of the great aspects of this assignment is that you'll be interviewing someone who's been in your shoes: he or she took Magazine Writing (many of them will know the class as Writing for Publication; the name of the class changed several years ago to more accurately reflect the focus). So your interviewee will probably be patient and understanding, and I know he/she will want to help you succeed!

As soon as I get a full list of alumni, I'll distribute copies of who each one is, their contact info, and a brief bio, so you can select who you'd like to interview. This will be done in mid-February. You should contact your interviewee at this point to introduce yourself and give him/her an estimated date as to when you'd like to start interviewing (probably in late March).

I hope you're as excited about this opportunity as we are.

This article is worth 25% of your grade.

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## VITA

Leta Fae Deithloff was born in Abilene, Texas on October 8, 1973, the daughter of Becky Frazier Hamrick and Stephen Andrew Hamrick. After completing her work at Midland High School, Midland, Texas in 1992 and her job at Super Summer Day Camp for the Midland and Lee High School Youth Centers from 1989 to 1992, she entered Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. During the summers of 1992, 1993, and 1994 she attended Midland College in Midland, Texas and worked for the Permian Basin Area Foundation in a fundraising campaign in 1992, Midland Memorial Hospital as a receptionist in 1994, The Midlander as an aerobics instructor in 1994, and the American Heart Association as a communications and public relations intern in 1995. During the summer of 1995 she attended La Universidad de las Americas in Puebla, Mexico.

In December 1995, Leta received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Texas A&M. During the following years she was employed as the Chapter Services Program Manager for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in Dallas, Texas, where she edited an award winning newsletter, supervised 7 educational programs for more than 6,000 people, recruited and trained volunteers including the highly specialized Peer Support Committee, and facilitated public and community relations. In addition to providing emotional/educational support for 4,000 people with MS, their family and friends, she also managed the provision of private counseling scholarships and group therapy sessions as well as received specialized training in Grant Writing, Crisis Counseling and Intervention Hotline.

In January 1998, Leta entered The Graduate School at the University of Texas. During this time, she was the recipient of *The 2002-2003 Hairston Prize for Excellence in Teaching*, an instructor for Rhetoric & Composition 306 (4 semesters) and 309K, The Rhetoric of Volunteerism (2 semesters), the head Teaching Assistant for over 1000 students in a Business Foundations Course in the MSIS Department (2 years), a Teaching Assistant for a Graduate School Professional Development Class and a Statistics class in the Educational Psychology Department, an Undergraduate

Writing Center Consultant, a Writing Across the Curriculum Advisor, and a course consultant for the Distance Learning and Education Center. She also received a Masters in Program Evaluation in May of 2001. Additionally, she has authored a statistical tutorial CD in Authorware, a chapter in a collective book on teaching large classes, several conference papers for the American Educational Research Association, College Composition and Communication, Service-Learning in Research, and Southwest Educational Research Association, and co-authored the webpage for the Center for Teaching Effectiveness and an article for The Educational Psychologist. She is also actively conducting several research projects in the areas of learning, creativity, instruction, writing, and service-learning.

Permanent Address: 11208 Savin Hill Lane  
Austin, Texas 78739

This report was typed by the author.